The signings that shook Anfield | Klopp & Wagner | Alexander-Arnold, Woodburn and Wilson | Dirk Kuyt tribute

LIVERPOOL FC



Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine liverpoolfc.com

LET'S GO MO

"I'M SO HAPPY TO BE HERE – I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEW SEASON TO START"

MEET THE MAN WITH PACE TO BURN!

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ISSUE 60 AUGUST 2017

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FOOTBALL

The stuff that happens on the pitch: exclusive interviews with current stars, the stats that matter plus blasts from the past

CLUB

Reaching out to communities at home and abroad, plus Anfield updates and the latest awesome official merchandise



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PATRIOT GAMES It wasn't quite the result he wanted but it was still an occasion to savour when Philippe Coutinho captained Brazil in their friendly against rivals Argentina in front of 95,000 fans at Melbourne's MCG. The Reds ace and his team-mates went close several times but it was Argentina



Photo Lucas Figueiredo/CBF

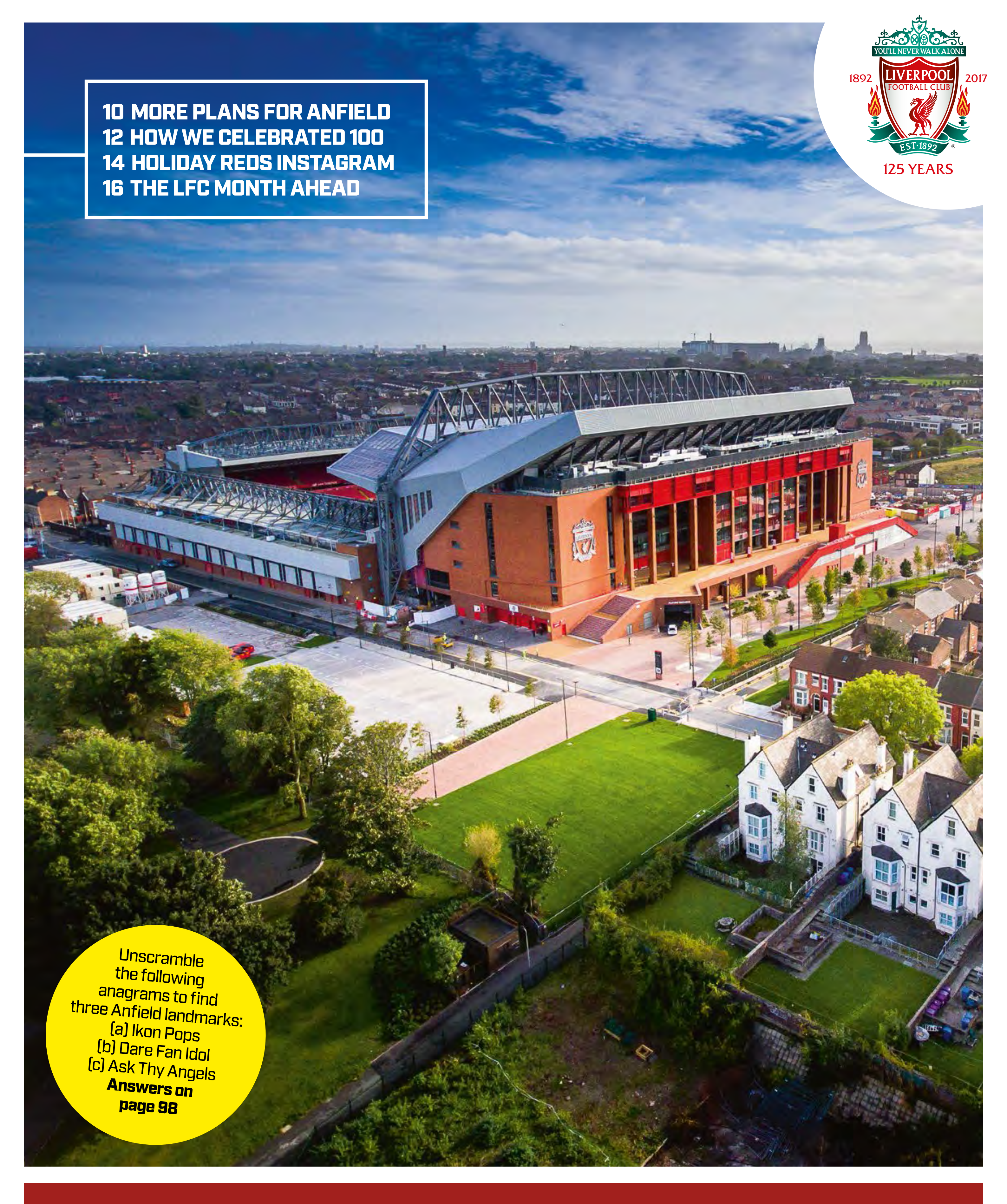
who won the match with a late goal from Gabriel Mercado. Meanwhile Emre Can was a member of the Germany team that won the FIFA Confederations Cup for the first time in their history.



SPIRIT OF 77 Forty years ago this August the course of LFC history changed when Kenny Dalglish signed from Celtic. One Glaswegian



journalist told the *Liverpool Echo* newspaper: "If you were to tell Dalglish he now has the football world at his feet, his most natural reaction would be to pass it to a team-mate. The 26-year-old Scottish international forward is currently the best all-round footballer in Britain and has a pedigree to prove it."



Unscramble the following anagrams to find three Anfield landmarks:
(a) Ikon Pops
(b) Dare Fan Idol
(c) Ask Thy Angels
Answers on page 98

How Anfield is shaping up ahead of the new football season

LIVERPOOL

HOME ADVANTAGE

Anfield was a visual treat last season and it's on course for looking even better in 2017/18

2022 vision

LFC is supporting Liverpool's bid to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games which, it's hoped, will leave a lasting legacy for communities across the city and beyond. As an existing world-class venue, Anfield is set to be utilised for ceremonies and the rugby tournament. There's more at liverpoolcg22.org.



Elsewhere in this issue you can learn about the latest improvements to Liverpool FC's home ahead of the new season. Lots is happening in and around the famous stadium too, with the city's deputy mayor recently presenting the latest stage in the area's ambitious £260m regeneration plans.

Anfield is one of the most famous neighbourhoods in the world and it's currently being reborn through a framework of unique opportunities for retail, leisure and hospitality operators. Building on the stadium's major transformation, a new High Street is being developed along with a pedestrian-friendly streetscape and high-quality public realm.

Liverpool FC is building an exciting new club store which will act as a high-value retail 'anchor' for the High Street, and there will also be a new working space for small enterprises interested in being based close to the stadium.

All this plus new homes being built, old homes being refurbished, and proposals for a new 150-bed hotel on track.

Together these changes are creating a vibrant community for people to live, work, visit and do business. Liverpool FC are one of the partners behind the regeneration, along with Liverpool City Council, Your Housing Group and Keepmoat, and you can find out more at **investinanfield.co.uk.**

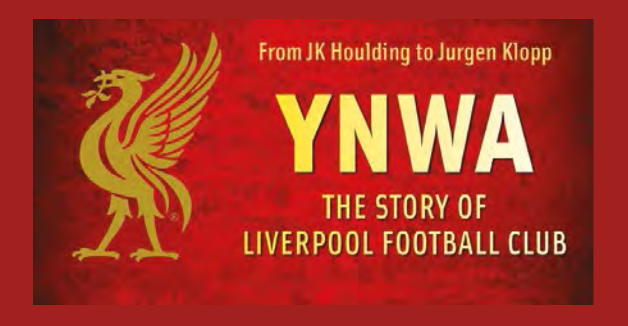


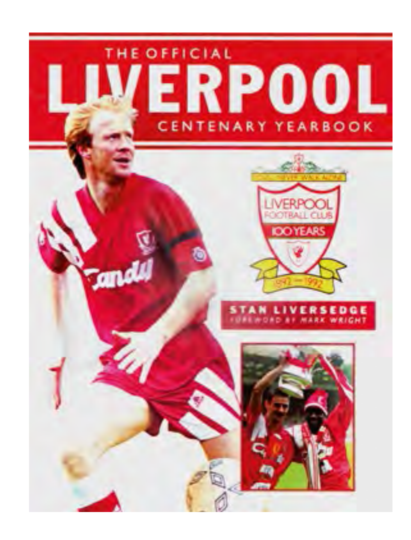
YNWA is back!

The critically-acclaimed *YNWA* stage show is set to return to Liverpool later this year – and fans have been given the chance by the club's official website to vote for a new scene to be added to the production.

Back by popular demand for the club's 125th anniversary, *YNWA* will be staged at the city's Royal Court from Thursday 28 September until Saturday 28 October 2017.

To mark its return, fans have been invited to vote from a shortlist that includes: LFC legend Billy Liddell; Ronnie Moran and the famous Boot Room; club servant Ian Callaghan; 70s idol Kevin Keegan; and Luis Suarez. Stay posted to liverpoolfc.com to discover the winner.






1992 Reds channel 1892

1992 and all that

A quarter-of-a-century ago Liverpool FC turned 100 years old and here's how we celebrated

Old enough to remember 1992? Linford Christie won 100m gold at the Barcelona Olympics, Bill Clinton became president of the United States of America, *Home Alone 2* was playing in cinemas, the Tall Ships visited the River Mersey in a spectacular 'parade of sail', and a certain Philippe Coutinho was born (on 12 June).

It was also the year that Liverpool Football Club celebrated its 100th birthday, with its centenary celebrations taking place in season 1992/93. At the time the Reds were FA Cup holders, having beaten Sunderland at Wembley the previous May with manager Graeme Souness returning to the bench following heart surgery. By September there'd not only be a new crest for the club and a new stand gracing Anfield, there'd also be a new hero wowing the fans and football world.

The new one-year-only crest was a shield inscribed with the words 'Liverpool Football Club' and '100 years', below the Shankly Gates 'overthrow' and above a scroll bearing the dates '1892-1992'.

The LFC first team, meanwhile, celebrated the centenary by donning 19th-century kit for a photo-shoot at Anfield. In the picture above from left to right it's: (back row) Jan Molby, John Barnes, Bruce Grobbelaar, Steve Nicol, Mark Wright, and (front row) David Burrows, Ray Houghton, Ian Rush, Dean Saunders, Rob Jones and Ronnie Whelan.

The two-tiered Centenary Stand (cost: £8 million) replaced the old Kemlyn Road Stand and was officially opened at Anfield ahead of a midweek game with Southampton on Tuesday 1 September 1992 – exactly 100 years to the day that Liverpool had played their first game at Anfield, a 7-1 victory in a friendly against Rotherham Town. Special guest Lennart Johansson, the UEFA president, unveiled a commemorative plaque and released 100 red balloons into the night sky.

Three weeks later, on Wednesday 22 September 1993, teenage striker Robbie Fowler scored on his debut against Fulham in the League Cup. "I wasn't surprised," veteran forward Ian Rush told the *Echo*. "I know he can get goals and I believe he can do it in the [all-new] Premier League. Robbie has a knack for scoring, he's quick and brave, and I see no reason why he won't have a good future."


The city's waterfront 25 years ago



Multi-coloured Anfield!



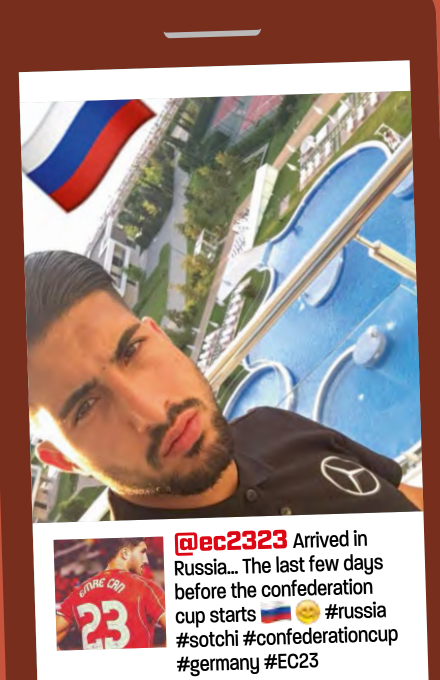


holiday special REDS ON INSTAGRAM

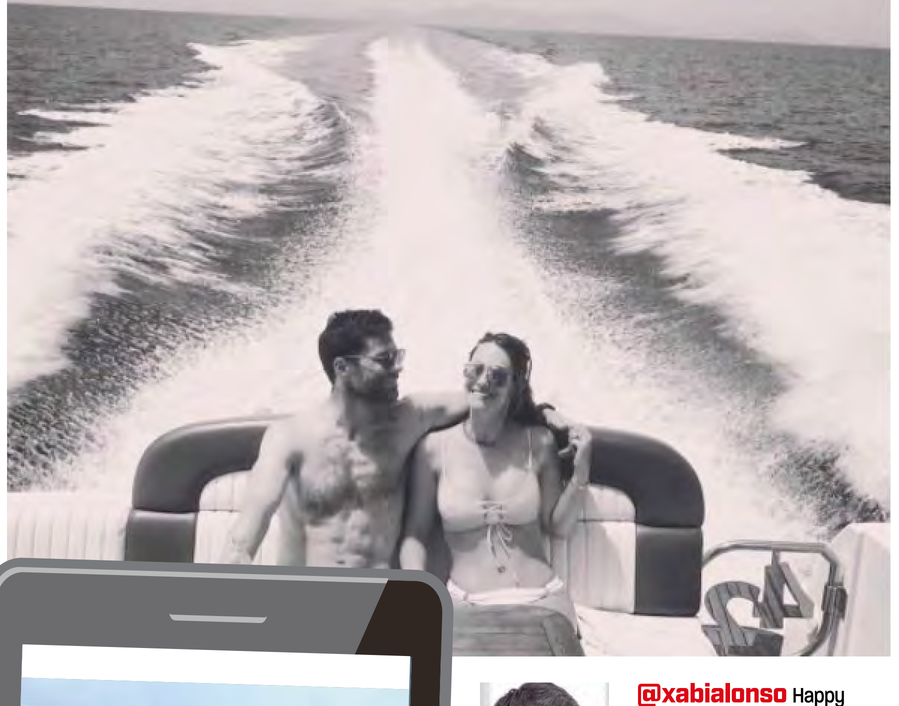
Current and ex-Liverpool FC stars make the most of the break!



@trentarnold98 Fun day 👯 🐪

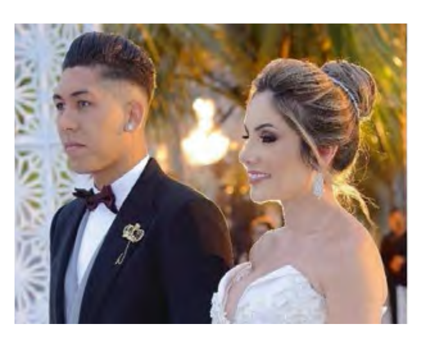


@ec2323 Arrived in Russia... The last few days before the confederation cup starts 🇷🇺 😊 #russia #sotchi #confederationcup #germany #EC23





@xabialonso Happy birthday my love!! Everything is so special with you 🖤





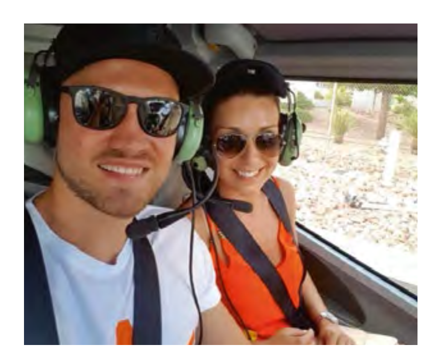
@roberto_firmino Te amarei de janeiro a janeiro. Até o mundo acabar 🙈

@phil.coutinho 👊 🇧🇷





@stevengerrard Botafoch 😎





@22mignolet22 Sunset grand canyon helicopter tour!! #grandcanyon #hooverdam #lakemead #valleyoffire #vegas #sunset 🙌 🔥 🌅 🌄 🚁



@divockorigi Concrete jungle where dreams are made of... 🗽🇺🇸🎶

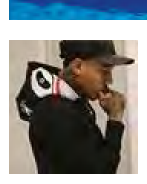




@danielagger22 This top guy is ready for the weekend 😎⛳(Agger for charity). I Had a great time in portugal. Thank you to the Steven Gerrard foundation for a great event 😎⛳ see you soon mate. YNWA



@iamdaniel sturridge LA ting....

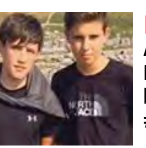


@nathaniel_Clyne Pool side at the crib 🇺🇸 LA



@jhenderson Celebrating with a 🍍 and mango smoothie. Thank you for the birthday wishes. Hope you all have a good weekend 😁🔥





@23_Carra At @xabialonso leaving party in Madrid with a few @liverpoolfc boys! #passmaster #legend #liverpool



@gwijnaldum Beautiful nature. I lOVE SURINAM 🇸🇷 🖤

WHAT'S



ON: JULY



REDS TAKE BERLIN STAGE

Liverpool FC will head to the German capital for a special pre-season friendly against Hertha BSC.

The Reds will face the Bundesliga side on Saturday 29 July in a special game which will see both clubs mark their 125th anniversary in a fixture that will be played under the banner 'Celebrating football since 1892'. The game will be held at the historic Olympiastadion Berlin where the Reds last played Hertha in 2008.

This will be the fourth time the two sides have met in friendly encounters and takes place just four days after Hertha BSC's official 125th anniversary. The game forms part of the milestone celebrations for both teams with festivities planned throughout the 2017/18 season.

WHAT'S ON: JULY

PREMIER LEAGUE ASIA TROPHY

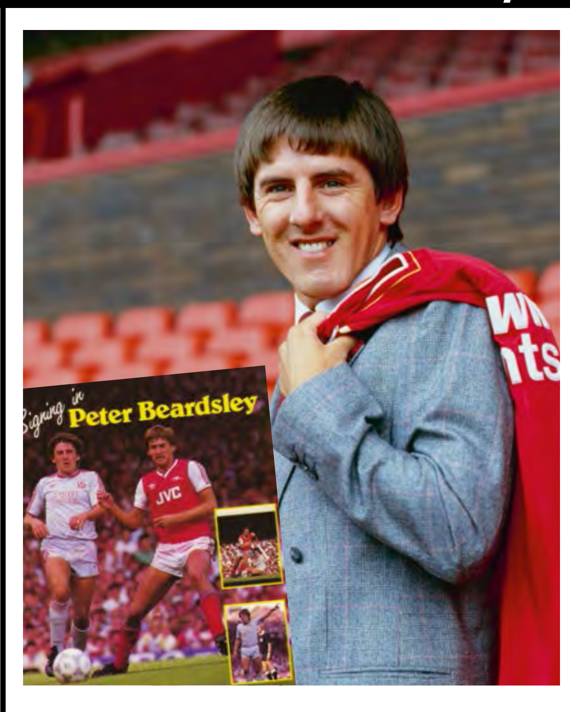
Prior to their Berlin appointment the Reds head to Hong Kong this month for the Premier League Asia Trophy.

The eighth edition of the tournament will take place at the Hong Kong Stadium on Wednesday 19 and Saturday 22 July. Liverpool will play Crystal Palace in the opening game and then West Brom or Leicester City in the final or third-place play-off. Liverpool last played in the biennial event back in 2007, losing out to Portsmouth in a penalty shoot-out.

Jürgen Klopp says: "We're really looking forward to playing in the Premier League Asia Trophy. It's important that the club takes part in competitions like this as it gives local fans the chance to get closer to the action. The club has a huge fanbase in Hong Kong and we hope to put on a good performance for our fans."



Anniversaries and birthdays



It's 30 years since Peter Beardsley joined the club from Newcastle United on 14 July 1987.

That summer Liverpool FC manager Kenny Dalglish smashed the British transfer record as the Reds splashed out £1.9 million on the Newcastle United and England attacker.

With John Barnes having also arrived at Anfield that same summer, Kopites were licking their lips at the new-look forward line and the England pair soon gelled with striker John Aldridge.

The attacking trio linked up to good effect to get Aldo off the mark after nine minutes in the opening game of the 1987/88 campaign against Arsenal at Highbury. Beardsley started as he meant to go on too, notching 18 goals in 48 games in an impressive debut season as the Reds finished as First Division champions.

Jim Beglin **54** on 29 July
Alberto Moreno **25** on 5 July
Dejan Lovren **28** on 5 July
Gemma Bonner **26** on 13 July
Mike Marsh **48** on 21 July
Peter Cormack **71** on 17 July
Ray Kennedy **66** on 28 July
Roger Hunt **79** on 20 July
Michael Robinson **59** on 12 July
Dirk Kuyt **37** on 22 July
Craig Bellamy **38** on 13 July
Danny Ings **25** on 23 July



43 years since Ray Kennedy, the last signing made by Bill Shankly, joined from Arsenal on 12 July 1974.
43 years since the great man announced his shock resignation on the same day.
56 years since defender Ron Yeats joined the Reds from Dundee United on 22 July 1961.
79 years since flying winger Billy Liddell was signed from Lochgelly Violet on 27 July 1938.

FIXTURES 2017/18

AUGUST

Sat 12	Watford (A)
Tue 15/Wed 16	CL Play-off 1st leg
Sat 19	**Crystal Palace** (H)
Tue 22/Wed 23	CL Play-off 2nd leg
Sat 26	**Arsenal** (H)

SEPTEMBER

Sat 9	Manchester City (A)
Tue 12/Wed 13	CL matchday 1
Sat 16	**Burnley** (H)
Tue 19/Wed 20	EFL Cup round 3
Sat 23	Leicester City (A)
Tue 26/Wed 27	CL matchday 2
Sat 30	Newcastle United (A)

OCTOBER

Sat 14	**Manchester United** (H)
Tue 17/Wed 18	CL matchday 3
Sat 21	Tottenham Hotspur (A)
Tue 24/Wed 25	EFL Cup round 4
Sat 28	**Huddersfield Town** (H)
Tue 31/Wed 01 Nov	CL matchday 4

NOVEMBER

Sat 4	West Ham United (A)
Sat 18	**Southampton** (H)
Tue 21/Wed 22	CL matchday 5
Sat 25	**Chelsea** (H)
Tue 28/Wed 29	EFL Cup round 5
Wed 29	Stoke City (A)

DECEMBER

Sat 2	Brighton (A)
Tue 5/Wed 6	CL matchday 6
Sat 9	**Everton** (H)
Wed 13	**West Brom** (H)
Sat 16	AFC Bournemouth (A)
Sat 23	Arsenal (A)
Tues 26	**Swansea City** (H)
Sat 30	**Leicester City** (H)

JANUARY

Mon 1	Burnley (A)
Sat 6/Sun 7	FA Cup 3rd round (TBC)
Tue 9/Wed 10	EFL Cup semi-final 1st leg
Sat 13	**Manchester City** (H)
Sat 20	Swansea City (A)
Tue 23/Wed 24	EFL Cup semi-final 2nd leg
Sat 27/Sun 28	FA Cup 4th round (TBC)
Tue 30	Huddersfield Town (A)

FEBRUARY

Sat 3	**Tottenham** (H)
Sat 10	Southampton (A)
Tue 13/Wed 14	CL last 16 1st leg
Sat 17/Sun 18	FA Cup 5th round (TBC)
Tue 20/Wed 21	CL last 16 1st leg
Sat 24	**West Ham United** (H)
Sun 25	EFL Cup final (4.30pm)

MARCH

Sat 3	**Newcastle United** (H)
Tue 6/Wed 7	CL last 16 2nd leg
Sat 10/Sun 11	FA Cup 6th round (TBC)
Sat 10	Manchester United (A)
Tue 13/Wed 14	CL last 16 2nd leg
Sat 17	**Watford** (H)
Sat 31	Crystal Palace (A)

APRIL

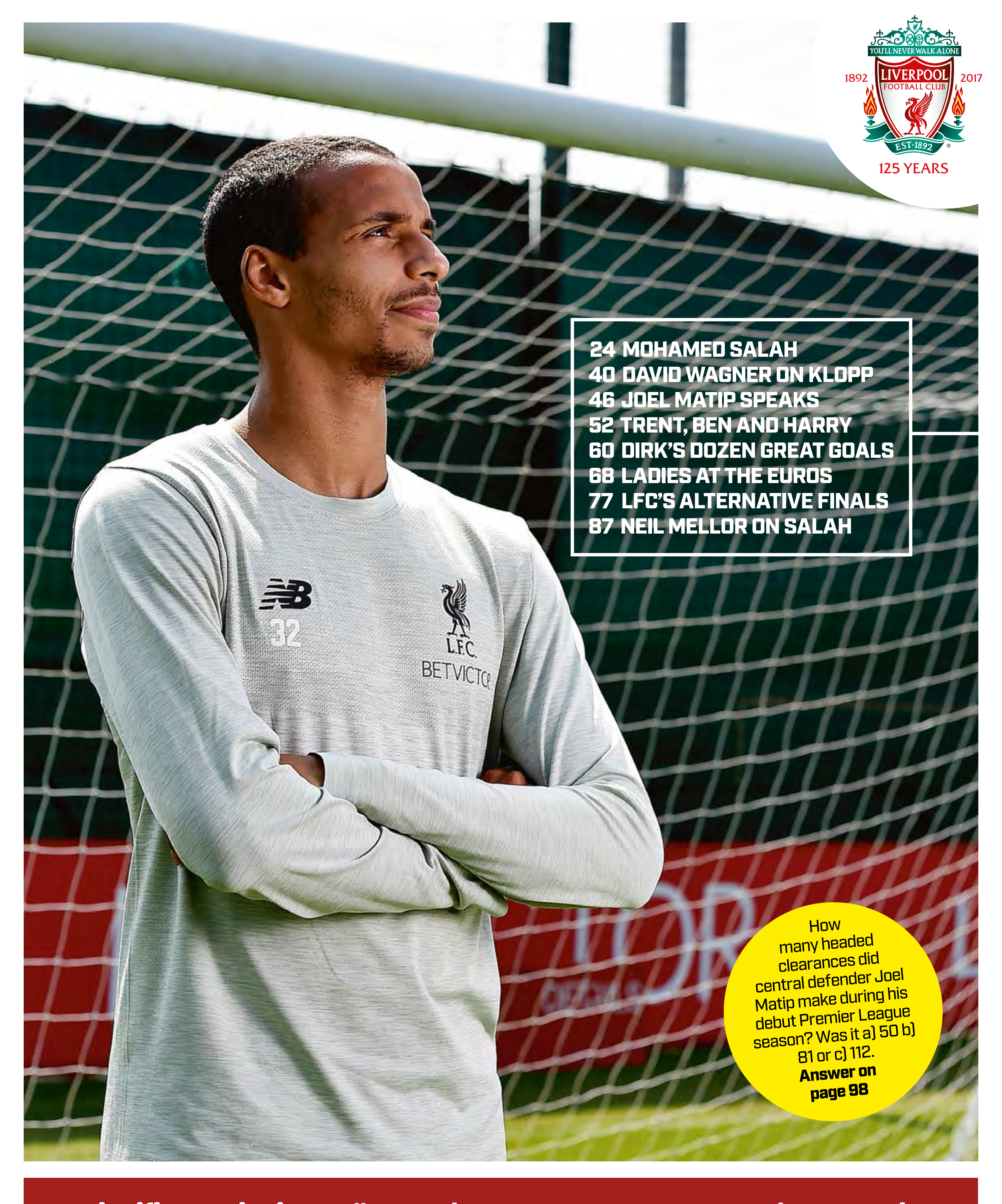
Tue 3/Wed 4	CL quarter-final 1st leg
Sat 7	Everton (A)
Tue 10/Wed 11	CL quarter-final 2nd leg
Sat 14	**AFC Bournemouth** (H)
Sat 21	West Brom (A)
Sat 21/Sun 22	FA Cup semi-final (TBC)
Tue 24/Wed 25	CL semi-final 1st leg
Sat 28	**Stoke City** (H)

MAY

Tue 1/Wed 2	CL semi-final 2nd leg
Sat 5	Chelsea (A)
Sun 13	**Brighton** (H)
Sat 19	FA Cup final (TBC)
Sat 26	CL final (Kiev)

*CL = Champions League


YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST·1892



How many headed clearances did central defender Joel Matip make during his debut Premier League season? Was it a) 50 b) 81 or c) 112.

Answer on page 98

Significant signings, Jürgen's best man, young guns and Euro goals

FOOTBALL



ADIOS ALEX & ALVARO

Goalkeeper Manninger and former Reds full-back Arbeloa hang up their boots

Liverpool goalkeeper Alex Manninger and ex-Reds defender Alvaro Arbeloa have announced their respective retirements.

Manninger joined the Reds on a one-year deal last summer after his contract at FC Augsburg expired. The Austrian, who turned 40 in June, didn't feature in a first-team game but enjoyed his time at LFC. "I finished at a high level I never dreamed of," he said. "I've had one of the greatest experiences in my career here, but it is time [to retire].

Arbeloa, now 34, succeeded Steve Finnan and preceded Glen Johnson in Liverpool's right-back berth. He joined from Deportivo La Coruna in the January 2007 transfer-window and made his debut against Lionel Messi's Barcelona in the Champions League first knockout round. When the Reds came close to winning the title in 2008/09 he was a consistent performer in the side. In 2009 he returned to Real Madrid, for whom he had made his senior debut five years earlier, and won one La Liga and two Champions Leagues at the Bernabeu.

More recently he made three Premier League appearances for West Ham United last season before being released. "Physically I was okay to keep playing, but it's time to say goodbye," he said. Alvaro was capped 56 times by Spain, helping his country to win the 2010 World Cup and 2008 and 2012 European Championships.



Saint Mauricio

Former Reds defender Mauricio Pellegrino has been appointed as Southampton's new manager.
The 45-year-old Argentinian stood down as Alaves manager in late May, after losing the Spanish Cup final to Barcelona and finishing ninth in La Liga with the Basque club which had been promoted the season before.

"My philosophy and the culture of the club will work well," he said upon signing a three-year deal at St Mary's. "I want to win matches, be successful and develop a team spirit where everyone gives 100 per cent and supports each other. I am excited and passionate about what the future holds."

Mauricio previously worked at Independiente and Estudiantes in his homeland, joining the latter after he was sacked by Valencia – his first job in management – after seven months in charge. Prior to his appointment by the Spanish club in May 2012, he had worked as a coach under Rafael Benitez at Liverpool and Inter Milan.

As a player he made 13 appearances for the Reds in 2005 after being signed by Benitez, for whom he also played during six years at Valencia from 1999.

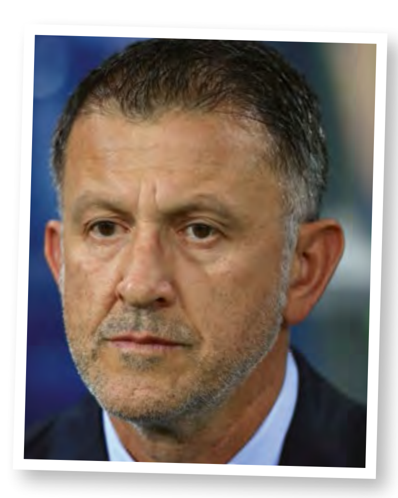
Melwood to Mexico

Mexico reached the semi-finals of the FIFA Confederations Cup last month under the management of a man who used to watch Liverpool FC train through a hole in the wall outside Melwood.

Two decades ago Juan Carlos Osorio was a young man studying for a degree in Science and Football at Liverpool John Moores University, and he ended up staying with the McManus family in West Derby. Then a complete unknown in the football world, he dreamed of watching LFC training sessions and later explained to ESPN: "I needed to not only get my licenses but to improve as a trainer on the field. So I needed to see how the professionals work."

After failing to talk his way into Melwood, he scouted the local area and literally found a hole in the wall. It was then that he knocked on the McManus door, asking for a stepladder to enable him to look over and onto the training pitches where Gerard Houllier and Roy Evans were taking charge of proceedings!

Osorio's Mexico reached the last four of the recent Confederations Cup tournament in Russia, where they lost to Emre Can's Germany. The Liverpool midfielder comes home with a winner's medal.





Niamh signs new deal

England Under-19s winger Niamh Charles has signed a new contract with Liverpool Ladies. The highly-rated 18-year-old has impressed for the Reds since making her debut at the age of 16, appearing in all but one of the team's matches in the 2017 FA WSL Spring Series. The teenager has made a total of 17 appearances for the club since making her first-team bow as a sub against Sunderland in April 2016.

Niamh was also nominated for the 2016 North West Football Awards' Women's Rising Star prize, having scored two goals for England U17s in their third-place play-off with Norway, as the Young Lionesses qualified for the U17s Women's World Cup last year with a 2-1 victory.

She says: "I am delighted to have agreed a new contract with the club. We showed earlier this year in the Spring Series that we can compete with the top teams and I am confident that we can challenge for trophies over the next few seasons.

"The manager Scott Rogers has shown great faith in the younger players, giving the likes of myself and Ali [Johnson] opportunities in the FA WSL Spring Series which highlights how serious the club is in bringing players through their youth set-up."

Rogers adds: "We are absolutely thrilled that Niamh has agreed a new contract. Since progressing through the youth set-up she has been absolutely brilliant, making the step up to senior level look effortless.

"Niamh is a player with huge potential who I have no doubt will be a key player for club and country in years to come. She has also proven over the FA WSL Spring Series that she can be a versatile player which highlights her outstanding footballing intelligence at such a young age."


1892
2017
L.F.C.
125 YEARS

I'M FEELING THE LOVE FROM THE FANS – I'M SO EXCITED TO BE HERE!

Soon after his signing was confirmed, Mohamed Salah sat down with the club's television channel LFCTV and here's what he had to say...


M.SALAH
11

I HOPE TOGETHER WE CAN GIVE EVERYTHING TO WIN SOMETHING FOR THE SUPPORTERS

Welcome to the club – how does it feel to officially be a Liverpool FC player?
I'm very excited to be here. I'm very happy. I was in Egypt and I came two days [before I signed]. Now I'm here and I'm very happy to be here. I would like to win something with the club. Everyone knows the club is very big. We have to do something for the fans and win something.

How much of Liverpool did you see last season?
I saw most of the games. They played so good, they played very well. I hope this season that we can improve and do better.

How much of an influence did the manager have on your decision to come here?
I'm very excited to start the season with him. Everyone knows he is a great man and a great coach. I'm very excited to start the season.

Who are you most excited to play alongside in the team?
They played so well last season. Mane played a fantastic season, Coutinho, Firmino, Lallana – all of them. I don't want to say just one name. All of them had a great season last year.

Are you comfortable in any of the attacking positions?
I have played on the right. Last season with Roma we played five at the back and two strikers; I was a second striker, like a no10. Sometimes I go on the left, though. I can play anywhere upfront.

Having had experience of the English game already, will that be a big help?
Yes, I was here and I have experience. I like to play here in the Premier League. I'm happy to be back and I'm excited.

Do you come back a better player?
One hundred per cent, yes! Everything [has improved]. Even my personality was different, I was a kid – I was 20 or 21. Now I'm four years older, everything is different. I have lots of experience in three clubs: I was at Chelsea, then Fiorentina and then Roma. I have good experience.

You only played 19 times for Chelsea – do you also have a point to prove here?
Yes, always. Even if I see myself playing very well in one thing, I try to improve to do it better and better. I always think about the small details because I need to improve more and more.

Last season with Roma was very productive for you, with 19 goals and plenty of assists – was it the best you've had?
I think so, it was a top season. Nothing changed, the season before I also scored 15 goals. I am improving and doing better and better every year. This is why I'm in a new challenge and I'm happy to have this challenge. It's not easy but I know that. I'm excited. It's not easy but I'm ready.

How excited are you to be coming to a football city like Liverpool?
Everyone knows Liverpool is a very big club. We have fans everywhere around the world. You can see on Twitter and Facebook that fans are crazy about [the club]. I'm happy for that because I feel the love from the fans. I feel the love from the fans in Liverpool here and I'm happy about that.

What are your feelings about the project ahead?
I'm excited. Liverpool haven't won the Premier League for a long time. We have a great team and very good players. I was watching the games last year and everyone was giving 100 per cent to win something. Everyone can see the coach gives everything. I hope to see that together we can give everything to win something for the club, for the supporters and for us.

You arrive ahead of pre-season – is it important that you're here before all of the hard work begins?
It's very important because I would like to start the pre-season with the team so I can know everyone well, as a person and also as a player. I'm here at the right time.

You're going to wear the no11 shirt at Liverpool – does it have any special meaning for you?
Firstly I appreciate what Roberto Firmino did – I have to thank him very much. I like the number 11; it was my number in Rome and also the national team before. I like this number. I have to thank him.

Liverpool fans have been hoping you would sign for the club for several years; what is your message to them now that you have?
What I can say to the supporters is that I'm very excited. I will give 100 per cent and give everything for the club. I am happy to be here and I really want to win something for this football club.



READY STEADY MO

Liverpool FC's new no11 is set to have supporters on the edge of their seats next season, and here's his story so far...


Standard Chartered
L.F.C.
125 YEARS
L.F.C.
125 YEARS
L.F.C.
L.F.C.

Liverpool FC's forward line will have an exciting new dimension next season. Mohamed Salah's arrival from AS Roma will give Jürgen Klopp a pacy attacking option in the mould of Sadio Mane, the man the Reds sorely missed first when he was away on Africa Cup of Nations duty, then when he sustained an injury which ended his season on 1 April 2017.

Mane's impact after joining from Southampton 12 months ago was such that despite missing chunks of his debut season it came as little surprise when he carried off the club's Player of the Year award. In terms of attacking intent and willingness to lead the press, Salah is cut from the same cloth as Mane.

Both Africans are 25 years old and approaching the peak of their careers. The options they will offer, particularly when lining up alongside each other as the wide men in an attacking trident playing off the main striker, could see Salah become a key cog in the attacking machine just as quickly as Mane.

Time and again last season, Kopites witnessed the same game at Anfield: the one in which lesser-ranked opponents packed men behind the ball, defended deep, closed down spaces and invited Liverpool to break them down. One key weapon in solving that particular puzzle is pace and the no defender in Europe will relish the prospect of 90 minutes up against Mane and Salah.

Another of Salah's attributes is his work-rate. A video was posted on YouTube last month that showed him sprinting back to help out his defence in the final minutes of a game

FOR ATTACKING INTENT AND WILLINGNESS TO PRESS HE'S CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH AS MANE







IN HIS FIRST YEAR IN EUROPE HE WON THE SWISS GOLDEN PLAYER AWARD FOR 2012/13



which Roma were leading by four goals. It is that kind of selfless, tireless endeavour that will endear him to his manager, team-mates and fans as much as his contribution in the final third of the pitch.

Salah was born in Basyoun in northern Egypt in June 1992 and started his youth career with one of the country's Premier League teams, Cairo-based El Mokawloon SC. By the 2010/11 season, he had progressed to the first team and scored his debut goal in a 1-1 draw against Al-Ahly on Christmas Day 2010.

The following season, he was a regular for the team known as the 'Mountain Wolves' before tragedy brought the Egyptian season to a premature end. On 1 February 2012, a riot at the Port Said stadium during a game between Al-Masry and Al-Ahly led to 74 people being killed and more than 500 injured. The rest of the domestic season was abandoned.

A fundraising friendly in honour of the victims, played between Swiss Super League side FC Basel and the Egyptian Under-23 side, gave Basel's representatives an opportunity to enquire about Salah's availability. In the summer of 2012 he moved to Switzerland on a four-year contract.

In his first season, he helped his new side to win the title comfortably and also played his part in their journey to the semi-finals of the UEFA Europa League. In a quarter-final second leg against Tottenham Hotspur he scored in a 2-2 draw before the Swiss team progressed on penalties. He also scored against Chelsea in the semi-final although Basel lost the tie 5-2.

His displays saw him receive the Swiss Golden Player award as the best player in the country for the 2012/13 campaign. "It was a very good year for me because this was my first year playing in Europe and for me it was fantastic," he said. "You know, it is very difficult for any player playing for the first time in Europe."

The following season Salah helped Basel to reach the group stages of the UEFA Champions League where they would meet Chelsea again. Basel won both games – 2-1 in London and 1-0 at St Jakob-Park – with Salah scoring in each fixture to crank up his Champions League credentials. His domestic performances had also put Basel well on their way to another league title success, but by January 2014 several interested parties were circling. Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers was among them but Chelsea made the first move and secured the Egyptian international.

However, his chances would prove limited at Stamford Bridge. Across a couple of half-seasons in West London he played just 19 times, scoring twice, with the goals coming in Premier League home wins against Arsenal and Stoke City. That was no reflection on him as Blues boss Jose Mourinho preferred to use Eden Hazard, Willian and Oscar. Perhaps the bigger question was why Chelsea bought him in the first-place.

After a year in London's SW3, the winger was off to Italy to join Fiorentina on loan for the rest of the 2014/15 season. Although Serie A has traditionally been a tough place to score goals, Salah impressed with six in 16 appearances as the men from Florence finished fourth.

While wearing the purple shirt, Salah took on the no74 jersey in recognition of those supporters who had lost their lives in the Port Said stadium disaster. "I wanted to pay a tribute to the victims of the stadium in Port



Said in 2012, where so many fans died because of tragic clashes. And to be clear, no-one has ever asked me to put this number on the jersey. It's something I felt inside and I chose to do it."

Such was the impression that Salah made that AS Roma negotiated a deal with Chelsea to take him to the Italian capital on a year-long loan for 2015/16. By the end of the season, he had been named as I Giallorossi's Player of the Season. He finished as the club's top goalscorer with 15 goals in all competitions [including 14 in the league as Roma finished third]. He also contributed six assists as manager Rudi Garcia, who was then replaced by Luciano Spalletti, managed to get the best out of the flying forward.

Last season was an even better one as Salah formed a prolific link with former Manchester City forward Edin Dzeko that carried Roma to within four points of champions Juventus as Spalletti's side finished as runners-up.

Salah scored 19 goals in all competitions and 15 in Serie A while Bosnian attacker Dzeko thrived on the opportunities and space his team-mate helped to create with 39 goals in total, including 29 in the league.



ON LOAN AT FIORENTINA HE SCORED SIX GOALS IN 16 GAMES AS THEY CAME FOURTH

Salah, like Mane, is able to carry the ball at pace and can slot in on either flank. Last season he created 22 chances for Dzeko, seven of them scored – making the pair the second-most prolific combination in Europe's top five leagues, after Ousmane Dembele and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang at Borussia Dortmund.

Salah has excelled on the international stage, too, scoring 29 goals in 53 appearances. He was one of the stars of the London 2012 Olympic football tournament, scoring three goals in four games – including one against Brazil – as Egypt reached the quarter-finals.

He was the joint-top African scorer in the 2014 World Cup qualification round and earlier this year scored two stunning goals to help The Pharaohs reach the final of the Africa Cup of Nations, but they were edged out 2-1 by Cameroon thanks to a goal from Vincent Aboubakar two minutes from time.

Salah was named as Africa's most promising talent in 2012 and was also selected in the continent's team of the year for 2016. There is massive interest in the player in his home country and ESPN named him as the 100th most famous athlete on the planet in a poll conducted last month.

Liverpudlians will be excited to see how Salah will add even more energy and goal-threat to a team who were the fourth-highest scorers in the league last season, averaging more than two per game.

Klopp says of his new recruit: "Mohamed has the perfect mix of experience and potential – this is a really exciting signing for us. He knows the Premier League, he has pedigree in the Champions League and he is one of the most important players for his country.

"His record in Italy has been

Words: William Hughes



HE HAS THE PERFECT MIX OF EXPERIENCE AND POTENTIAL, IT'S A REALLY EXCITING SIGNING FOR US

outstanding and he possesses qualities that will enhance our team and squad. His pace is incredible, he gives us more attacking threat and we are already strong in this area."

The Reds manager is most excited, however, by Salah's ambition and desire to keep pushing himself forward. "Most important for us is that he is hungry, willing and eager to be even better and improve further. He believes in what we are trying to do here at Liverpool and is extremely keen to be part of it.

"He is very excited about performing for our wonderful supporters. He is an ambitious player who wants to win and win at the highest level; he knows he can fulfil those ambitions with Liverpool."

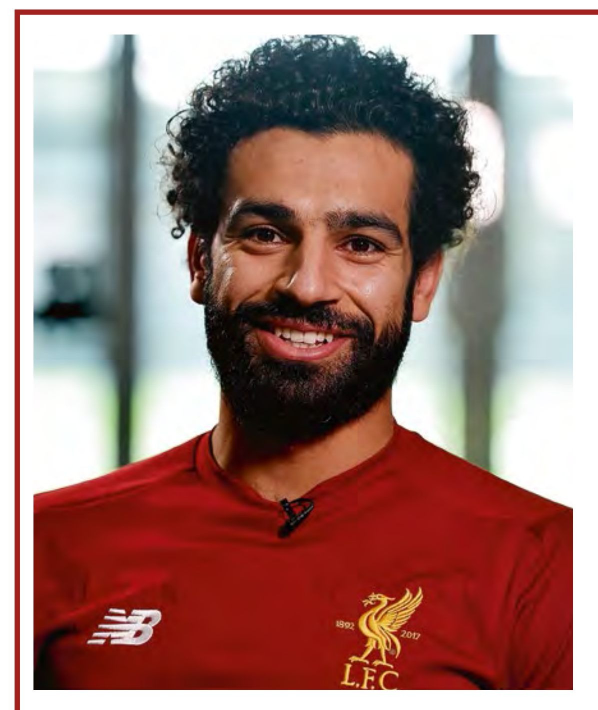
The player himself has previously admitted that a career in football did not really cross his mind until he was a teenager. "Football for me was nothing but a game. Maybe it was not even a hobby. Maybe it was a distraction – an impossible dream. I thought, for the first time, it could also become a job when I was 14. I was playing for El Mowkaloon and I was left-back, wearing shirt no3.

"My first successes were at the same time as my family having to make sacrifices. It was a very difficult time for them. I used to leave the house early in the morning and I used to come back home very late. I was forced to take five buses to reach my club.

"At El Mowkaloon the coach told me: 'You will be with the first-team tomorrow'. It was, for me, an unbelievable moment and I couldn't believe it. I was 16 years old."

The no11's career has taken on a forward trajectory ever since and both he and Liverpool supporters everywhere will be hoping the next chapter will produce tangible success in terms of bringing trophies to Anfield.





"PERHAPS ONLY MESSI IS FASTER"

JOSE MOURINHO, AS CHELSEA BOSS IN JANUARY 2014: "I like the fact that he can play the same way our attacking players do, which is players with adaptability to play right, left or behind the striker. He's young, he's fast, he's creative, he's enthusiastic. He looks the kind of humble personality on the pitch, ready to work for the team."

MARWAN AHMED, JOURNALIST FOR EGYPTIAN SPORTS WEBSITE KINGFUT: "The obvious quality is his speed. I haven't seen a player as quick as him. He plays on the shoulder of opposition defenders. If you put the ball in the right place in behind teams then it's impossible for them to catch him."

FORMER ROMA MANAGER LUCIANO SPALLETTI: "Salah is an exceptional player. He is the best player I've coached in my career. We knew the superb characteristics of the player, but we did not expect him to have such an impact on Italian football."

VINCENZO MONTELLA, HIS MANAGER AT FIORENTINA: "Perhaps only Messi is faster than him with the ball at one's feet."

JAMES MONTAGUE, EGYPTIAN FOOTBALL JOURNALIST: "He is quite a modest guy who has expressed a lot of gratitude to the people who have helped him. So, in many respects, he is the perfect package. He has his head screwed on, he's worked hard and he has made the most of the opportunities that have come his way."

CURRENT EGYPT MANAGER HECTOR CUPER: "I like players who are similar to Salah, the type of player who always puts the team first. I can't ask him for more than he is already providing for the team. He is a talented, modest and responsible player. I advise him to carry on with the impressive performances and to keep competing with his team-mates for a spot in the national team's squad."

Transfer timeline

Today they'd probably be called 'marquee' signings. Over the last 125 years, though, they're simply the players whose Anfield arrivals caused a ripple of excitement among the fans...

1892 MALCOLM McVEAN

A young winger with Glasgow club Third Lanark, he was one of 13 Scottish professionals acquired by joint-managers John McKenna and William Barclay when Liverpool FC was founded. The 'Team of the Macs', as it was dubbed, played their first game against Rotherham Town on 1 September 1892, and skipper McVean scored the first goal in a 7-1 victory. A year later he got Liverpool FC's first goal in their debut season in the Football League, in a 2-0 win at Middlesbrough Ironopolis on 2 September 1893.

1898 ALEX RAISBECK

Liverpool FC's first superstar, he was poached from Stoke City and gave the Reds eleven seasons of sterling service. A Scottish international defender (one of his shirts is held at the club museum), he captained LFC to a first top-flight title in 1901, and another in 1906.

1900 SAM RAYBOULD

Joined from neighbours New Brighton and went on to become the first player to score 100 League goals for Liverpool FC – a feat he achieved in 170 matches between January 1900 and December 1905.



Central defender Tom 'Tiny' Bradshaw



Goal-getting Sam Raybould



Alex Raisbeck: another great Scot

1904 JOE HEWITT

Chester-born Joe joined from Sunderland and blasted Liverpool to their second top-flight title, in 1906. Upon retiring he stayed at Anfield in various capacities, including trainer, steward and press-box attendant, until his death in 1971.

1912 ELISHA SCOTT

One of the football's finest-ever goalkeepers, Elisha was brought over from Belfast for an LFC career which would span 22 years, and he was reportedly the subject of the first-ever player chant at Anfield. He was praised by the *Liverpool Echo* as well as both sets of supporters after a fine debut between the posts for Liverpool, aged 18, in a goal-less draw at Newcastle United. In 2013, a century after his debut, he was honoured with a special hour-long documentary on LFCTV.

1919 TOM BROMILOW

"I should think that it is one of the luckiest signings I have made." So said club secretary George Patterson after Tom, fresh from military service, had wandered into Anfield looking for

Bob Paisley the player in a photograph taken around 1950

a trial in 1919. Local lad Tom became a virtual ever-present for a decade, winning two titles with the team.

1925 GORDON HODGSON
Snapped up after starring for a South African touring side in the 1920s, he became Liverpool's answer to Dixie Dean. "He will do the club much good," mused the *Football Echo*. "Liverpool have found him a cute, strong, combining forward who can give and take a bump with impunity." With 241 goals he remains third in the all-time LFC scorers list behind only Ian Rush and Roger Hunt, and his total of 17 Liverpool hat-tricks is yet to be broken.

1930 TOM BRADSHAW
Arguably the first great Liverpool central defender, he was acquired from Bury for a then club-record transfer fee of £8,000. Two years later 'Tiny' (he was physically huge) became Liverpool's 150th different league scorer when he found the net in a game against Newcastle.

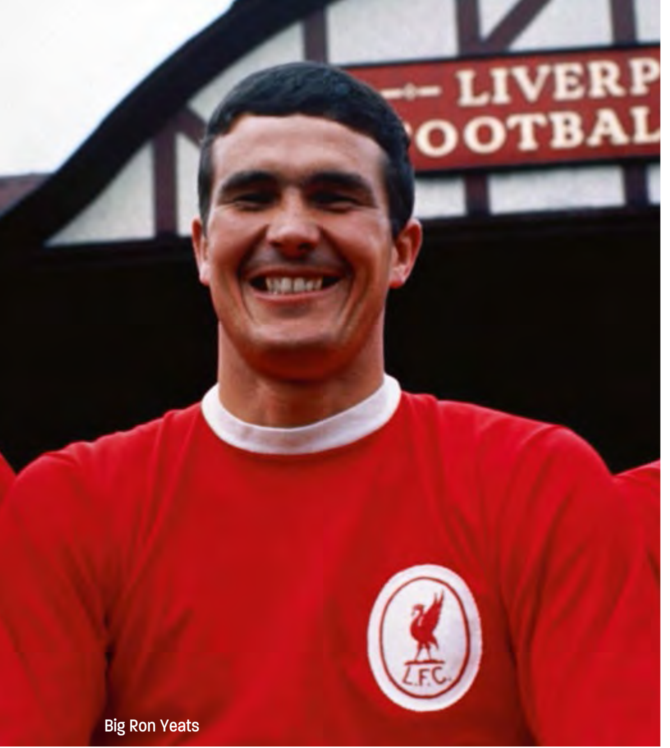
1933 BERRY NIEUWENHUYS
One of six South Africans signed by Liverpool FC in the 1930s, he endeared himself to the fans with a first goal against Everton in the Anfield derby of September 1933. His career was interrupted by the Second World war but he returned to a First Division medal with the Reds in 1946/47.

1937 WILLIE FAGAN
Cost the Reds £8,000 – then a record for a teenager – when he arrived from Preston North End. A strong and skilful inside-forward, flame-haired Fagan was a key figure at Anfield either side of the Second World War and skippered the side to that 1946/47 title.

1938 BILLY LIDDELL
With Dalglish and Gerrard, he's one of the (pretty-much) undisputed triumvirate of Liverpool FC's greatest-ever players. The Reds have Matt Busby, once on their books and later to manage Manchester United, to thank: it was his recommendation that led to Billy's arrival from Fifeshire club Lochgelly Violet. A thrilling two-footed winger with a thumping shot, Liddell gave LFC everything for the best part of two decades before the Shankly era kicked in.

1939 BOB PAISLEY
Such is his pedigree as one of world football's greatest managers, it's easy to forget the wonderful service Bob gave Liverpool as a player too. Left-half was his position and he made over a quarter-century of appearances between 1946 and 1954, acquiring a First Division winner's





Big Ron Yeats



Future skipper Emlyn Hughes

medal along the way. He was actually signed from Bishop Auckland just before war broke out in 1939, from under the noses of Sunderland.

1961 RON YEATS

Ian St John had arrived at Anfield eight weeks earlier, and fellow forward Roger Hunt had been there for three years, but it was the signing of centre-half Ron Yeats, from Dundee United, that symbolised everything that Bill Shankly was bringing to Liverpool. It was Big Ron who first modelled the new all-red kit, and Big Ron who lifted that first-ever FA Cup.

1963 PETER THOMPSON

Liverpool's first flying left-winger, paving the way for Heighway and Fairclough in future seasons. Peter joined from Preston North End and thrilled football grounds up and down the country with his touchline-hugging wizardry.

1967 EMLYN HUGHES

'Crazy Horse' was the backbone of Bill Shankly's second great side. Famously, when Shanks was driving his 19-year-old signing from Blackpool back to Anfield he was stopped for having a defective rear-light and told the traffic policeman: "Don't you know who I've got in this car? The captain of England!" The policeman said he didn't recognise the youngster, to which Shankly replied: "No, but you will." And Emlyn did of course go on to skipper his country.

1968 ALUN EVANS

The boy with the Mod hairstyle became Britain's most expensive teenager when Liverpool paid Wolves £100,000 for him. His other claim to fame was a hat-trick against Bayern Munich in the 1970/71 Inter-Cities Fairs Cup (precursor to the Europa League).

1971 KEVIN KEEGAN

Keegan had just turned 20 when he joined from Scunthorpe United, and straightaway he set Anfield alight with his fearless pocket-dynamo performances. In the six years he wore a red shirt he scored 100 goals and won three League titles, the European Cup, the FA Cup and two UEFA Cups – and became a Seventies footballing superstar to boot.

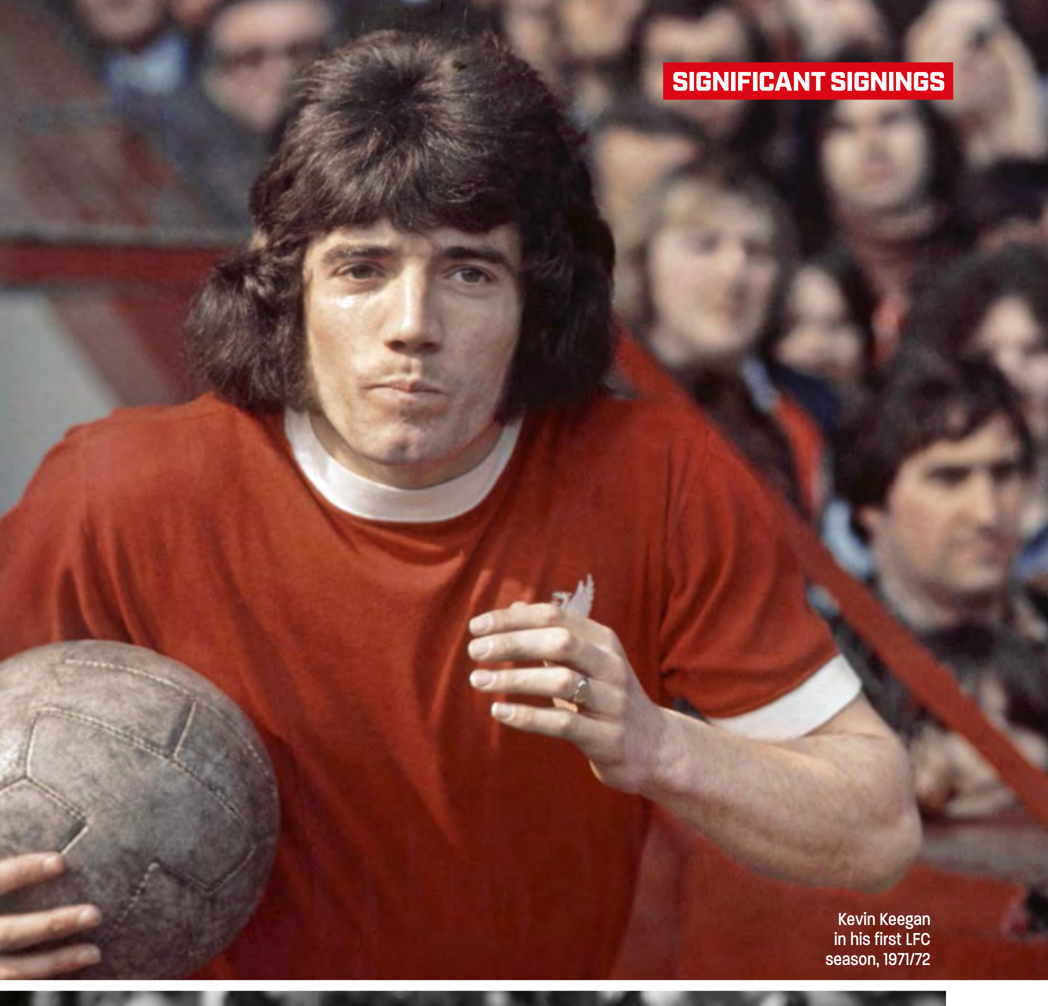
1974 RAY KENNEDY

His signing from Arsenal passed under the radar amid the shock of Shankly's retirement, but what an addition he was to the team which new boss Bob Paisley would lead to even greater glory – converting from striker to midfielder with Liverpool reaping the rewards.

Wing wizard Peter Thompson


Alun Evans


Ray Kennedy


Kevin Keegan in his first LFC season, 1971/72


Ian Rush: already earning accolades by 1982


The King with Bob Paisley, summer 1977

1977 KENNY DALGLISH
Liverpool's greatest-ever signing, surely. In the summer of *Star Wars* and *Saturday Night Fever*, he arrived from Celtic for a British transfer-fee record of £440,000, just after fellow Scot Alan Hansen and six months before Graeme Souness. "I felt comfortable the very first time I walked into the place. That was the thing that struck me in training. They'd just come straight off two trophies the year before – European Cup, the League – and got to the FA Cup final. And they just said, 'You get nothing for last year'. The attitude was magnificent."

1980 IAN RUSH
Signed for a whopping £300,000 (at the time) as a skinny young Welsh striker from Chester City, eight months after a fresh-faced midfielder called Ronnie Whelan had joined from Irish club Home Farm. Left sixteen years later, after two spells at Anfield, having scored a club-record 346 goals. Liverpool's greatest goalscorer, bar none.

1984 JAN MOLBY
With super-skipper Graeme Souness having decided to leave Liverpool for foreign climes, in came 21-year-old Danish midfielder Jan Molby from Ajax. It took him a year or two to find his



feet – but what great feet. Part of the 1985/86 Double-winning team and a cult hero among Kopites.

1987 JOHN BARNES
The first piece in player-manager Kenny Dalglish's new Liverpool jigsaw for season 1987/88 (Peter Beardsley and Ray Houghton would soon follow). He joined from Watford for a fee of £900,000 and spent the next few seasons tearing teams apart and delighting audiences with his grace, pace and sublime skills – first on the wing and then in a more central midfield position. A joy to watch.

1991 DEAN SAUNDERS
A big-money buy from Derby County, from whom he joined the Reds, under new boss Graeme Souness, along with central defender Mark Wright. In his first season the Welsh striker scored two hat-tricks in Europe.

1995 STAN COLLYMORE
Signed by manager Roy Evans for a British transfer-fee record of £8.5million, having starred at Nottingham Forest and just made his senior England debut. Developed a formidable partnership with Robbie Fowler in 1995/96 and perhaps most famous for his last-minute winner in the first 4-3 win over Newcastle.

1999 SAMI HYYPIA
Joined as a relative unknown from Dutch club Willem II and posed for a group photo-shoot with manager Gerard Houllier, assistant Phil Thompson and five other new arrivals (Erik Meijer, Sander Westerveld, Vladimir Smicer, Titi Camara and Stephane Henchoz). Became the defensive rock upon which Liverpool's triumphs of the Noughties were built.



Luis Suarez on his first day at Melwood six years ago

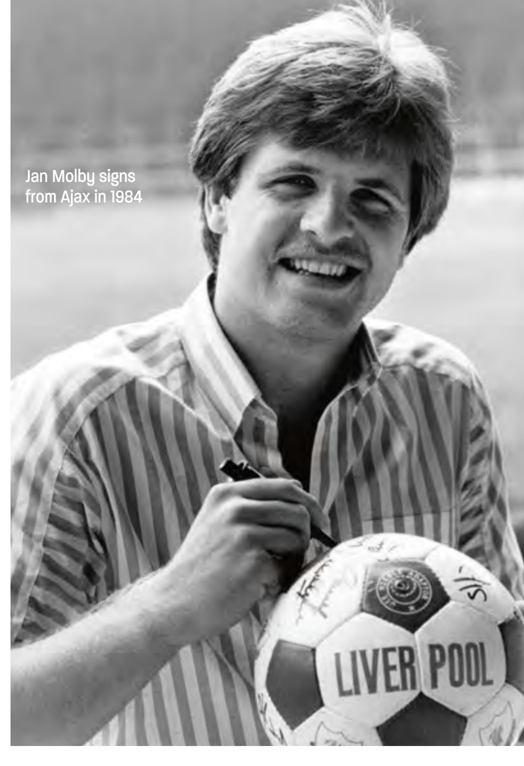

Dean Saunders with Graeme Souness



Sami Hyypia in esteemed new-signing company, 1999



Sadio Mane



Jan Molby signs from Ajax in 1984

2004 XABI ALONSO
Unveiled at Anfield on the same August day as fellow Spaniard Luis Garcia, as new Reds manager Rafael Benitez made a statement of intent. From his very first game Xabi dazzled the Reds faithful with his exquisite touch, awareness and range of passing. 'Oh the man's a midfield maestro, and his passes are so delightful, everyone wants to know, Alonso Alonso Alonso!'

2007 FERNANDO TORRES
Anfield was abuzz when, aged 23, he signed from Atletico Madrid for a club-record fee of £20.2million. He took the price tag and the new environment in his stride, destroying Chelsea's defence with a superbly-taken goal on his Anfield debut.

2011 LUIS SUAREZ
Signed from Ajax on the same day that Torres departed, 31 January 2011, and Andy Carroll arrived for a headline-grabbing transfer fee. Three-and-a-half years, 82 goals and plenty of incidents – good and not so good – later, the Uruguayan joined Messi and Neymar as part of a formidable front-three at Barcelona.

2016 SADIO MANE
The Senegalese flyer became the most expensive African player in history when he joined the Reds from Southampton back in June 2016. He told this magazine that the price tag didn't bother him and it certainly proved that way as he scored a brilliant solo goal in an opening-day win at Arsenal and never looked back. He finished his maiden season as Liverpool FC's joint top-scorer in the Premier League with 13 goals in 27 appearances and was named as LFC's Player of the Year. Here's hoping Mohamed Salah can make a similar impact in season 2017/18.


THIS IS
LIVERPOOL
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MY MATE KLOPP

An exclusive chat with David Wagner, manager of newly-promoted Huddersfield Town and close pal of Reds boss Jürgen


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David, can you tell us how you first got to know Jürgen Klopp?

I've actually known him longer than my wife! I was best man at his wedding. The first time we met was when I had just switched from Eintracht Frankfurt to Mainz in 1991 and went into the dressing-room at my new club. When I walked in for the first training session Jürgen was already there. He had joined Mainz the previous year. I think it was love at first sight! Or love 'from the first view' as we say in Germany. We started talking and quickly became friends because he was, and still is of course, a good guy. I realised this very early on after meeting him.

You both possess a loud, infectious laugh – what else do you have in common?

I think one of the big reasons why we got on so well and became friends in the first place was a similar sense of humour. We laugh about the same jokes and like similar things. We have a lot in common. We both think about football and our teams all of the time and want our teams to give everything.

Tell us about your time together as team-mates at Mainz...

At one stage we competed for a similar place in the team, upfront. But that never affected our friendship. After a while Jürgen moved to a different role in the side anyway so that made it easier. When we played together at Mainz in the German second division we usually had to battle against relegation. It was often a struggle to stay in the league and we had some down times or bad results during those seasons. But at the end of the season we usually had a big up because, more often than not, we won the last and most important game to stay in the league. That was always a big celebration and we did some good socialising together then.



David with the play-off winner's trophy

Does the transient nature of the game make it rare that you build lasting friendships such as yours with Jürgen?

Yes. It's probably only Jürgen and maybe a few other guys who I played alongside that I became lifelong friends with. Those friendships grew over the years because we lived in the same cities and went on holidays together. When I retired I probably only had two, what I would call real friendships from my 12 or 13-year playing career and Jürgen is one of those guys.

As managers you both have extremely busy schedules. When you meet up, what do you like to chat about?

You won't be surprised to hear it's probably 95 per cent football, four per cent family and then the rest is about all the other stuff that goes on in the world every day. Football dominates, I think that's to be expected when you know our jobs and our personalities.

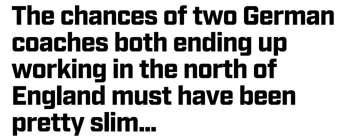
WE GOT ON WELL AND BECAME FRIENDS BECAUSE WE HAD A SIMILAR SENSE OF HUMOUR

The Kirkless Stadium: we're heading here on Tuesday 30 January

Football is all about different opinions; despite being friends you must disagree on some aspects of the game or what happens in certain matches...

I think when it comes to football we don't have too many big arguments. Of course we disagree and might have different views about games or players or decisions or certain situations. But in the end, like is often the case in football, there isn't always just one right answer. Sometimes there is more than one way to look at something. I think our friendship helps us to do that and have different opinions on something.

Also, because we are friends, we are able to tell each other the truth about something rather than just what the other person might like to hear. Of course as someone working in football you might not like to hear the truth sometimes, but it's how we help each other. The truth, rather than what you might like to hear, is always more beneficial and that is the approach we each have if we are talking about the game together.



The chances of two German coaches both ending up working in the north of England must have been pretty slim...

My wife didn't know where Huddersfield was when I first told her I had the job offer. Jürgen and I had a laugh about it when we realised what it meant. We are best friends and both from Germany yet have ended up working in two cities in England that are only something like 50 or 60 miles away from each other.

Being so near to each other might have happened in Germany, that would have been easier to understand. But for it to happen in England, the most important football country in the world, is definitely unusual. And of course we both work for clubs where Bill Shankly was the manager in the past, so that is another major coincidence.



The Reds faced the Terriers in a pre-season friendly in July 2016

You must have discussed the differences between your homeland and England...

Of course, many times. It definitely is different. The English football culture,



at either Championship or Premier League level really, is much different to Germany and the Bundesliga. Jürgen and I came to realise that quite quickly and we talk about it a lot.

I think the biggest difference is the games on Boxing Day or New Year's Eve. In Germany around that time of the year we have some down-time and get a chance to be with our family and relax for maybe a week. It's really a time to pause and reflect, think about the past year and maybe the future too. Here it's almost the opposite. There is no time to pause as it's one of the busiest times for football. There is loads happening with even more games and this was totally new for me.

But Jürgen clearly enjoys English football and you certainly feel the same way...
Definitely, I really enjoy it here. Both of us are managing clubs with passionate fans. We started a project here at Huddersfield, a typical British club, where I am the first foreign manager in the club's history. I have the feeling that we are making our first steps in the right direction. I enjoy every single day working in the job and in English football. Everyone is able to beat everyone else and there are always surprising results – that's what I like about the football here.

Reds fans love Klopp's passion on the touchline – as his friend do you ever talk about this?
[Laughs loudly] I know some people in England think that he is crazy on the sidelines; the way he shouts and encourages the supporters to make more noise or how he jumps around when a goal is scored by LIverpool. But from what I see – and you might not believe me – I think he's actually calmed down compared to how he used to be back in Germany! He has always been emotional on the sidelines and was much more so back in the Bundesliga. But that's him – he's honest.



OF COURSE, WE BOTH WORK FOR CLUBS WHERE BILL SHANKLY WAS THE MANAGER IN THE PAST

Would you say yourself and Jürgen have a similar coaching style?
I never think about this. From a distance it's probably easy to make comparisons between us because we both come from Germany. But it's not for me to say if we are similar when it comes to coaching.

From what you know of your friend, do you see him staying at Anfield for a very long time?
From talking to him regularly and what I know of him, I got the feeling that he felt he had found his next big project or exercise when he came to Liverpool in 2015. To be fair, it is a big project but it's one that I know excites him a lot. I was in Liverpool, at Anfield and Melwood, to see Jürgen on a few occasions and it's clear he is working with a lot of good people, so it's a very interesting project he has started there.

From what I see, I think the feeling among the Liverpool fans is that they are on the right path with Jürgen too and that they think they are just taking the first steps now. I think that's a good atmosphere for him to develop and grow something special. For him it was definitely the right place to come to at the right moment.


Huddersfield's on-loan Reds keeper Danny Ward

DAVID WAGNER ON DANNY WARD

"He's a proper goalkeeper. Not only is he a proper keeper but he's a good guy too. I'm very happy that we had the chance to work with him. He started the season very strongly and showed a lot of effort. He helped us and hopefully we helped him to become a better keeper too. Jürgen didn't have too much to do with the loan really. We were already aware of Danny and knew we needed someone. I then had a quick chat with Jürgen about him. He knew that I had the same idea of how to play the game and it would make sense for a Liverpool player to come here and take some steps forward at our club."

Interview: John Hynes


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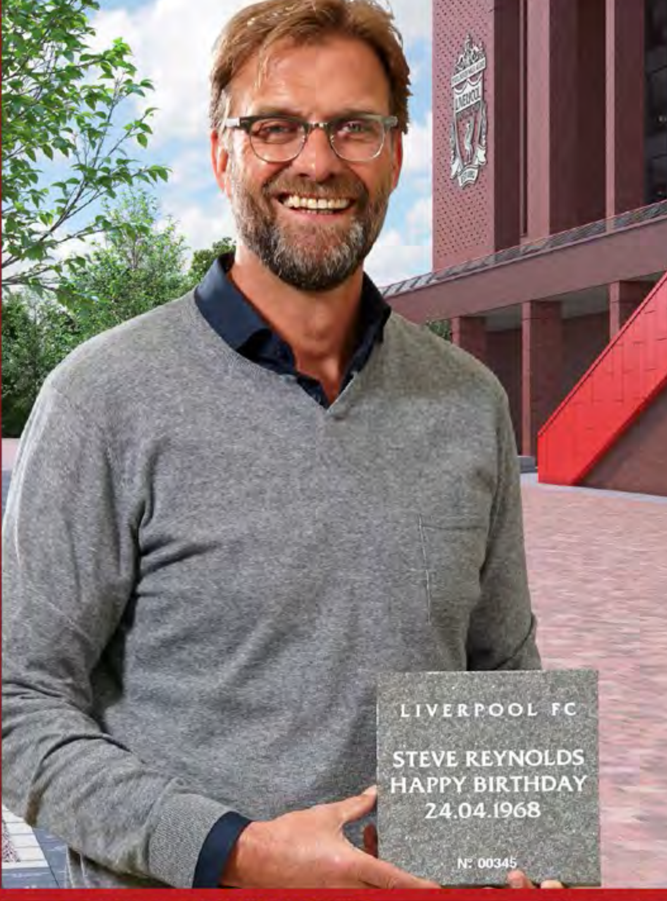
JOEL MATIP: ON THE RECORD

He hit the ground running in 2016/17 but the cultured central defender insists he has to improve next season

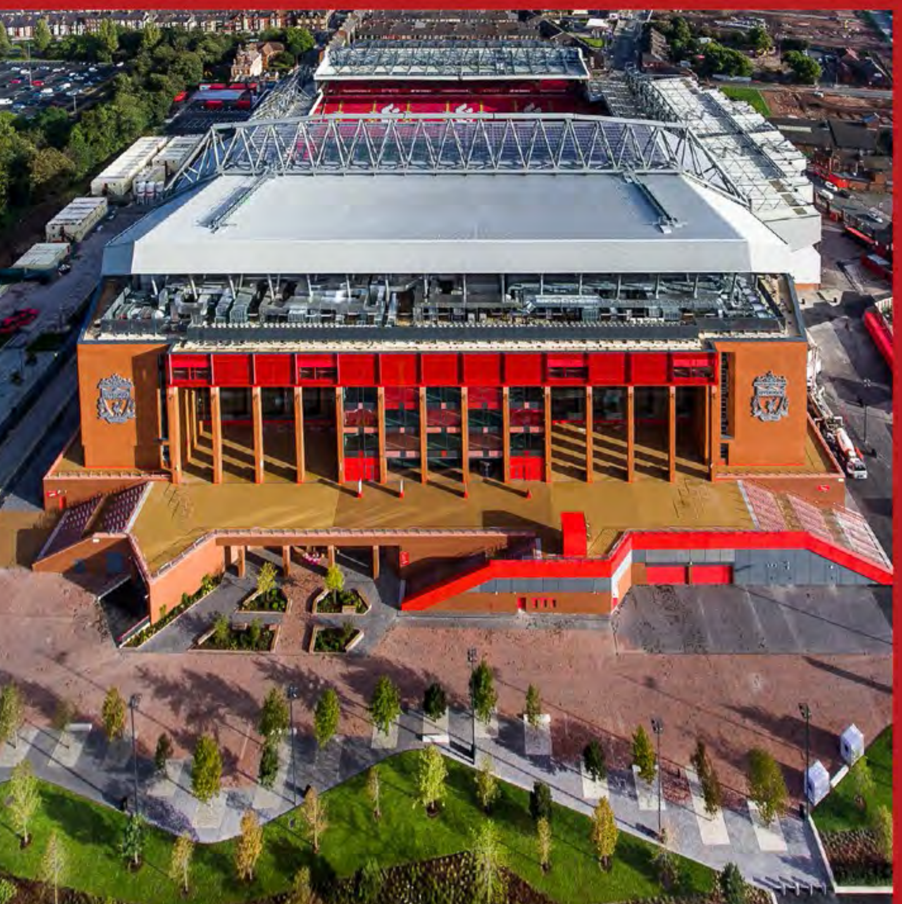

NB
32
L.F.C.
BETVICTOR


LIVERPOOL FC
STEVE REYNOLDS
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
24.04.1968
PAUL DAVIES
TRUE RED-YNWA


L.F.C.


LIVERPOOL FC
STEVE REYNOLDS
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
24.04.1968
Nº 00345





In music they call it the 'difficult second album' syndrome; when a new band bursts onto the scene with a stunning debut but can't quite follow it up with something even more special. In football it's often the other way around: a new signing struggles at first to adapt to his new surroundings but shows his true class in season 2.

With Joel Matip you get the feeling it's the best of both worlds: hugely impressive first release, even better one coming up – particularly if two reviews from well-respected sources are anything to go by.

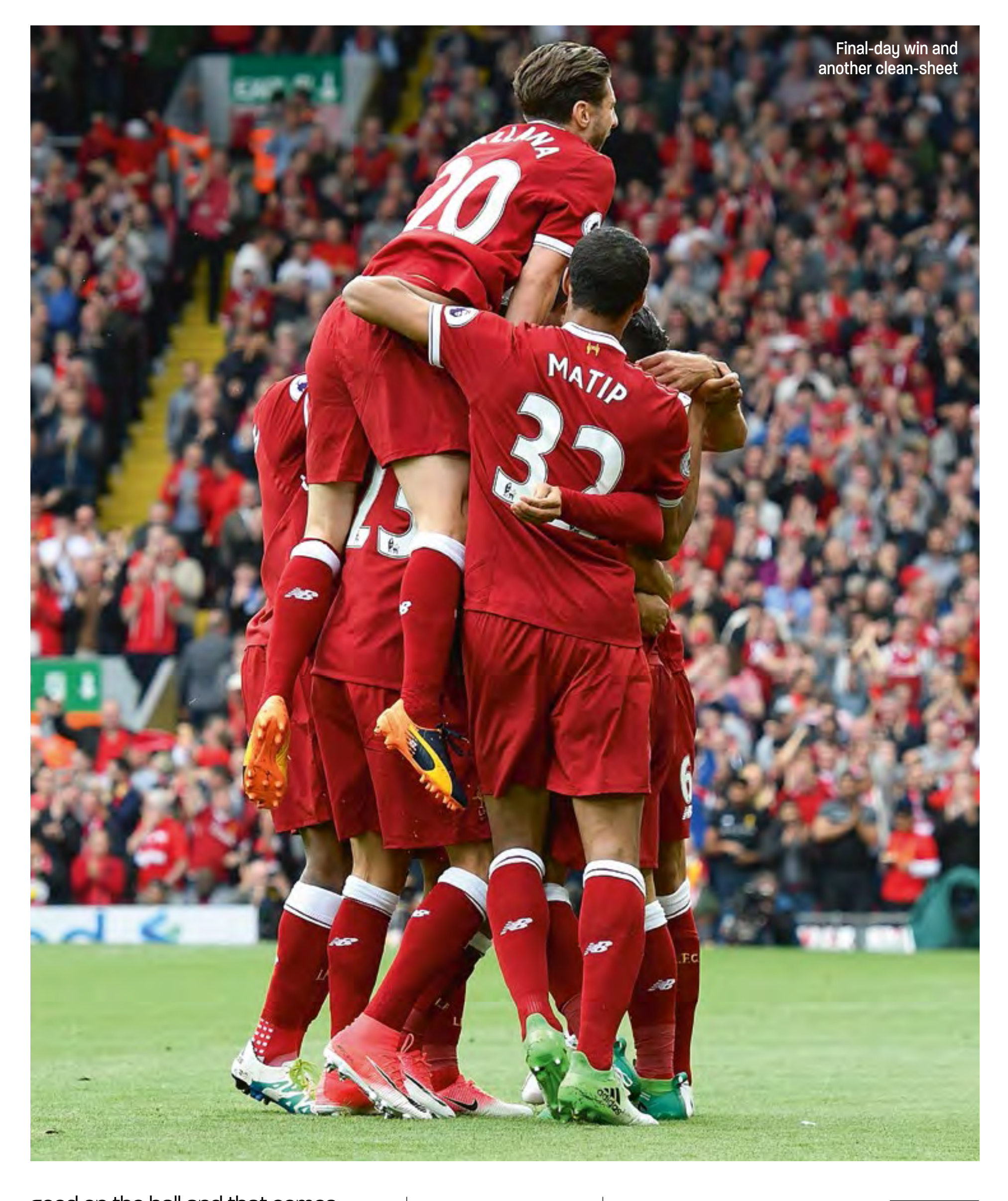
"The first season is always tough, not only for defenders but any Premier League player," says Daniel Agger, in conversation with Liverpool FC's official website. "Playing your first season in the Premier League, you always have to adapt [and] some do it quicker than others."

Daniel, now 32, played at the back for Liverpool between 2006 and 2014 before re-joining hometown club Brondby for two seasons. A similar ball-playing centre-half, he adds that Joel "will learn from last season, I'm sure about that. To play for Liverpool you need to be consistent and that's something you can see after a few seasons. His first season has definitely been good and I think he can be happy with that."

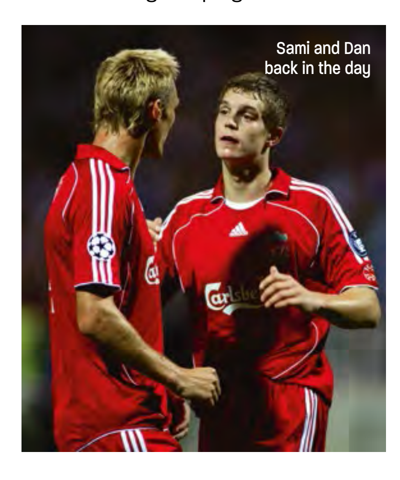
Earlier in season 2016/17 another former Reds central defender, Sami Hyypia, was back at Anfield as a matchday guest and LFCTV asked him about Matip's progress. "I knew him obviously from Germany," said Sami. "I think I played against him as well, and then I managed Bayer Leverkusen when he was playing at Schalke.

"He's a good player, a big guy and a dominant player. Good on the ball, and that's a big part of how this Liverpool team plays: when you want to play football, you need to have somebody who's comfortable on the ball. Then on the other hand you have to have a strong defender there.

"I don't know him personally but of course his style of play is that he's good on the ball and that comes from the confidence that he can play football. If you want to see similarities with me, I think there are some – but he's a bit quicker than I ever was!"



Final-day win and another clean-sheet


Sami and Dan back in the day

Matip made 29 out of a possible 38 appearances in his Premier League debut season, 17 of which were wins with four defeats and eight draws. He finished the campaign especially strongly, holding the line in a Reds side which secured five clean-sheets from its final six fixtures.

He'd set the bar high from the start. Tottenham Hotspur away isn't the easiest fixture these days in which to make your Premier League debut. Joel passed the test in Liverpool's 1-1 draw at White Hart Lane last August and so nearly marked the occasion with a goal, rising above Jan Vertonghen from a James Milner in-swinging corner to head against the crossbar.

Four minutes into injury-time he also picked up his first yellow card in English football, which if anything showed a determination to fight to the last kick to preserve his team's advantage.

MATIP IS A BIG GUY AND DOMINANT BUT HE'S COMFORTABLE ON THE BALL TOO

Home fans got their first glimpse of the new man in September's 4-1 victory over Leicester City which marked the official opening of the expanded Main Stand at Anfield.

While Liverpool's attacking prowess grabbed the headlines, Matip's assured performance alongside Lucas at the back drew comparisons with Hyypia in the same central-defensive position 17 years earlier. In 1999 the 25-year-old Finn had cost a bargain £2.5million from Dutch club Willem II; at the same age Matip was a free transfer from Schalke.



I'M VERY SELF-CRITICAL BECAUSE I ALWAYS WANT TO IMPROVE MYSELF

Joel had missed the opening-day win at Arsenal then the defeat at Burnley following an ankle injury which had prevented him from completing a full training session on the pre-season North American tour.

He was then an ever-present up to and including the 2-0 win over Sunderland at Anfield on 26 November. Another knock on the ankle – "not the same injury but the same region" according to boss Jürgen Klopp – sidelined him for the subsequent Premier League fixture: Bournemouth away, when Liverpool's eleven-game, 14-week unbeaten run finally came to a end.

As he looked to recapture the peak match-fitness that comes only from playing week in week out, Matip's fortunes in January seemed to mirror those of the team.

Confusion over his international status ahead of Cameroon's participation in the Africa Cup of Nations meant he was unable to return to first-team action until the home game against Swansea City, when he appeared as a late substitute as the Reds searched for a late equaliser on an Anfield off-day. By the end of that difficult month he was back from the start to bolster the defence in the hard-fought 1-1 home draw with Chelsea.

From the start of February to the end of the season he started every game but one (Bournemouth, at home this time) and was particularly impressive in his first Merseyside derby (at Anfield, dealing with the threat of Romelu Lukaku) as the Reds strove to regain their early-season consistency and chase down that all-important fourth place in the table at the very least.

His level of performance rarely changed. In the Premier League he won two-thirds of his 'duels' and had a tackle-success rate of almost 75 per cent – and pundits and fans were also impressed by his comfort on the ball in the heat of battle. He averaged 58.59 passes per match, more than Philippe Coutinho (43.52) or Emre Can (53.19), and was fifth on the list of most passes by a Liverpool FC player last season (behind Milner, Henderson, Lovren and Clyne) despite those absences at the turn of the year.

"I really like to have the ball," he says. "It's one of the nicest things out on the pitch. I try to do my best: when to look forward, when to create chances or to help my team-mates in front. But I'm very self-critical. I always want to improve myself.

"You have to work hard and keep trying and learning – that's the way you get better.

"Before I came here I knew about the Premier League. I saw a lot of games and I had an idea what to expect. So I prepared right from the beginning. Maybe the top teams try to play a bit more, but every team gives everything in this league.

"The ball goes from one end of the pitch to the other, all the time, so you can always be vulnerable if you're not at your best. You have to concentrate because in every match one situation can decide it."

Joel registered a creditable 26 shots on goal over the course of 2016/17 but had just one goal to show for it: a header in the 4-2 victory at Crystal Palace in October. "If he can chip in with a few more next season, that's a bonus," says Agger. "It doesn't matter if you're a defender or a striker, you always like to score goals. But obviously his main thing is to defend and keep clean-sheets."

Matip's second season is imminent and the omens are good. But for him, it's all about the team. "As a group of players we are all working hard and the coach will not let things stand still, he is constantly trying to make us better. We know the history of this club – and we all want to win cups and titles in the future."

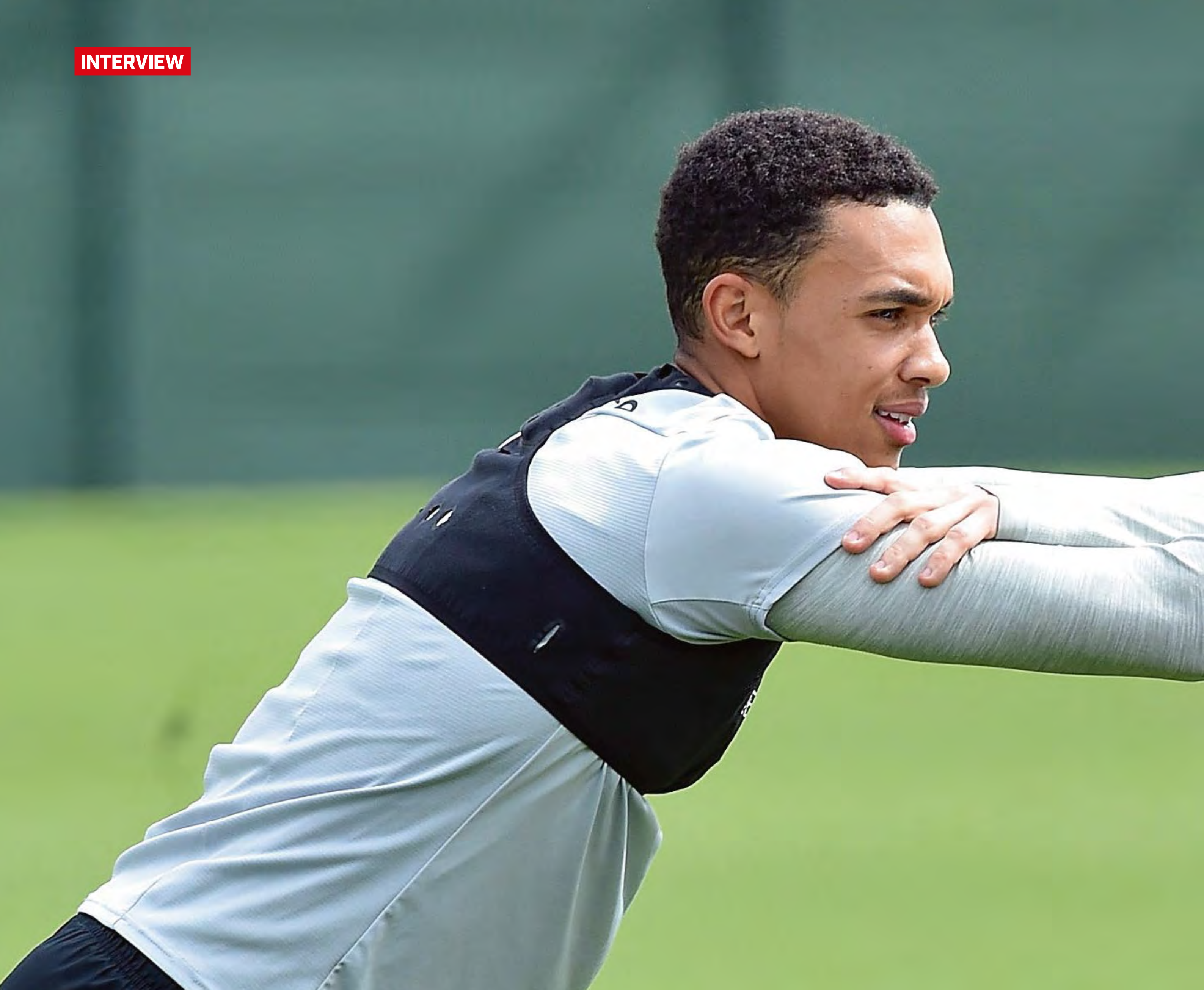

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Trent Alexander-Arnold, Ben Woodburn and Harry Wilson all made their first-team debuts in 2016/17 and here they reflect on that breakthrough campaign and their hopes for the future...

POWER OF 3





ARE YOU HAPPY WITH HOW FAR YOU HAVE PROGRESSED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

TRENT: A year ago I didn't expect the season to go as it did, to be honest. It's been a bit of a whirlwind because in 2015/16 I was playing for the Under-18s but now I'm with the first team on a daily basis and I just didn't see it coming. But once you get the opportunity as the three of us had last year, you've just got to make sure that you take it because you only get one chance. You see it happen a lot where young players don't really take that opportunity and that's where it can go wrong, so you really have to make sure you make the most of it.

BEN: I feel similarly to Trent. It was a bit of a shock at the start of the season when I was so involved in the friendlies and so on. Training with the first-team every day is hopefully making us all better players. All three of us moved up to Melwood around the same time and I think that made the step-up a lot easier and helped us all.

WHEN YOU GET THE OPPORTUNITY LIKE WE DID LAST SEASON, YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE IT

Scoring in pre-season was good too. For a forward, if you score a goal or provide an assist...it's all you want to do, and thankfully I managed that and it gave my confidence a boost.

HARRY: I think after the season I had with injury in 2015/16 I wanted last season to be a good one and I feel it has been. I scored quite a lot of goals for the Under-23s and moving up to Melwood on a full-time basis has helped me as well. I think training with the first-team day in, day out gives you confidence and it makes you a better player.

It's been made easier to get involved by having Trent, Ben and other younger players at Melwood with us, too. We're lucky to have been given this opportunity and the hard work that we've put in has been noticed, so now that we're at Melwood we don't want that hard work that got us here in the first place to go to waste. It's up to us to take our chances when they come.

ALL THREE OF YOU HAVE BEEN AT THE CLUB A WHILE, SO HOW DID IT FEEL TO MAKE YOUR FIRST-TEAM DEBUTS IN 2016/17?

TRENT: It means a little bit more to each of us because we have been part of the Academy for quite a long time. Every year that goes by that you're at the club, it means a little bit more to make your debut. Once you've been here the number of years that we have, it means a lot more than, say, if you've just signed and you make it straightaway.

We know the history of the club and understand the hard work that

Lean on me: Trent and Harry in training


Ben on the ball at Melwood

we've had to put in to get to this point. It's not just a journey by yourself, you do it with your family and everyone around you, so it influences all of them as well. It's good to make them proud of you.
BEN: Yes, I think my family were very proud and it meant as much to them as it did to me to make my debut and get my first goal.
HARRY: I'd had a few injuries which probably stopped me from progressing beforehand. But I feel as though I've moved on from that now and it was important to make my first-team debut last season. Hopefully, I can push on and get more game-time with the first-team in the future.

CAN YOU PICK ONE PARTICULAR MOMENT THAT STANDS OUT FROM LAST SEASON, 2016/17?

HARRY: I think for me it was definitely my debut in the FA Cup third-round replay at Plymouth Argyle last January. Although I only got 25 minutes, that debut was what I had been aiming for since I first joined the club 12 years ago. So for that moment to come around was definitely my highlight of the season.
TRENT: I would say mine was the Manchester United game at Old Trafford. Like Harry said, you are dreaming for your debut but you also still dream about that Premier League debut as well so that meant a lot, especially with it being against a team like Manchester United at Old Trafford. I thought it was a good performance all-round that day too, so I'll pick that one.
BEN: The Leeds United game in the EFL Cup fifth round has to be my highlight of the season. It was just a dream come true. Scoring the goal at the Kop end – everything about that night was a fairytale and I'll remember it for a long time. Another highlight was starting the game at Stoke City because, as Trent says, a Premier League debut is something that everyone wants to achieve. On a different day I perhaps could have won a penalty but we went on to win the game so it was a good day.



Woodburn scores! That night v Leeds, that goal

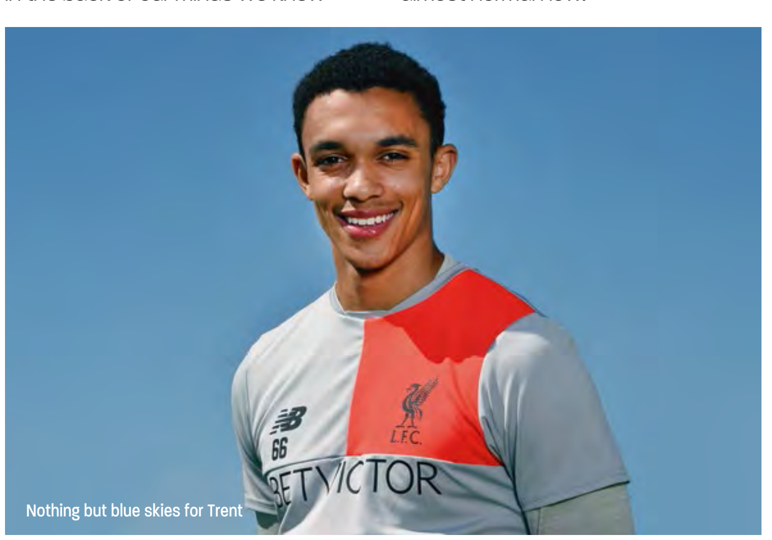
YOU ENDED THE SEASON BY HELPING THE UNDER-23S SPOIL EVERTON'S TITLE-WINNING PARTY BY WINNING AT GOODISON PARK – HOW DID THAT FEEL?

TRENT: We knew that they were going to lift the Premier League 2 trophy after the game, so I think that gave us a bit more motivation to go and beat them because we didn't want them to beat us and then lift the trophy on the back of a derby victory. We didn't really want them to have that double!

We thought: let's try and spoil the party. And I think going into the game we already knew that we were a better team and we were full of confidence that we'd beat them. It wasn't too comfortable but I think in the back of our minds we knew that we were going to win that game.

HARRY: Captaining the Under-23s team has been good. I was given the captaincy at the beginning for the season and it was a little bit unfamiliar to me because I hadn't been a captain before. [The former coach] Michael Beale gave it to me at the time and I thought I took it in my stride. I tried to do it to the best of my ability and we had quite a successful season with the Under-23s.

BEN: Training with the first-team on a regular basis at Melwood has been good and I think that having all the youngsters and the lads from the Under-23s around me has made that a lot easier. How the first-team are with us all has helped that process too. They have made us feel so comfortable over time that it feels almost normal now.



Nothing but blue skies for Trent

WITH CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FOOTBALL ON THE AGENDA, IT MUST BE AN EXCITING TIME TO BE PART OF THE FIRST TEAM SET-UP...

TRENT: I think it's been exciting for young players for a few years now. We saw under the last manager [Brendan Rodgers] that he was giving young players chances and you see it even more with our manager now. He's willing to give young players opportunities and I'm sure there will be more given next year to players coming up through the Academy. That's what you hope for.

The season before last, when we were at the Academy, we were looking up to Kev Stewart, Connor Randall and Brad Smith because we wanted to be where they were. We're all grateful that we are in that position now and maybe there are players who are at the Academy hoping that they can do the same next season. It definitely gives you more motivation with the manager we have.

TRAINING WITH THE FIRST-TEAM GIVES YOU CONFIDENCE AND MAKES YOU A BETTER PLAYER

YOU DON'T GO ON THIS JOURNEY ALONE – YOU DO IT WITH FAMILY AND PEOPLE AROUND YOU

HARRY: It is great for Liverpool to get back into the Champions League, especially considering the club has so much history in that competition. The qualification adds more games to the season and with FA Cup and League Cup as well, it gives more opportunities for younger players to be involved. Hopefully if we do get further chances we can take them.
BEN: It would be great to have the opportunity to play European football but, like H says, we know that if we do have that opportunity, we will have to take it. There hasn't been a European night at Anfield since the Main Stand was expanded so I'm sure those games will be good to savour.

CAN YOU PICK OUT YOUR PERSONAL GOAL OF THE SEASON FROM 2016/17?

HARRY: I quite liked my goal away at Manchester United in the Under-23s when I did a little back-flick. I think the game it was in as well made it more special. It's always good to score in the big fixtures and against a team like Man United, so I would probably say that one.
BEN: Mine was definitely the Leeds United goal just for what it meant to me. *[Harry and Trent pretend to snore!]* The one away at Arsenal early in the season for the Under-23s at the Emirates was a favourite of mine too. I felt I took it well and we won the game [a 3-1 victory], so it was just up there for me really and I felt it was one of my better goals of the season.
TRENT: I'd definitely say the goal in that last Under-23s game of the season against Everton because it just meant a lot for me to score against them as our city neighbours and rivals. To score the winner at Goodison Park on the night that they were lifting the Under-23s league title meant that it put a bit of a downer on their celebrations which made us a little bit happier.

IT WAS A GOAL IN THE MOULD OF THE ONE SCORED BY CARLOS ALBERTO IN THE 1970 WORLD CUP FINAL...

TRENT: I'd seen it compared to that, so I looked it up and that was the first time I'd ever seen that goal. I'd heard it was a special goal scored for Brazil in the World Cup final so it was nice to hear one of mine being compared to that!

WHICH COACHES HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST INFLUENCES IN HELPING YOU REACH THIS STAGE OF YOUR CAREER?

BEN: There are so many. I'd say the main one was Pep Lijnders. When we were in the Under-15s and Under-16s, he taught me a lot and made it easier for us all to feel comfortable there and I will always be grateful to him for that.
TRENT: Like Ben, I'd like to mention Pep because he also played a big role in my development. He developed me a lot as a player and he developed me off the pitch as well. He was the first coach to give me the captaincy at Liverpool for a full season so I was thankful for that, and that helped me develop and mature as a player and I'd like to thank him a lot.

Harry getting off the first-team bus



Ben and Harry strength-training

I'd also say Alex Inglethorpe as well. He was harsh with me at times but I knew that I needed that at the time. It was constructive criticism and it helped me a lot.
HARRY: Michael Beale was definitely mine. When he first came to the club, I was in his first age-group team, the Under-16s, so he knew me from that age and then when I first moved up to what was the Under-21s at the time, he took that team as well and had me with him then. I think giving me the captaincy this season just pushed me forward and helped me grow as player and as a person, so I'd definitely say him.

Since I've been up at Melwood, I'd say Pep Ljinders as well because coming up here isn't easy but he made me feel comfortable. He told me what I needed to work on and I've tried to do that.

IF WE FAST FORWARD 12 MONTHS, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT YEAR?

TRENT: I'd still like to be around the first-team and have a lot more appearances. I'd like to be more of a member of the team in terms of being trusted to play in Premier League fixtures and potentially Champions League games too. So, the ambition

THIS MANAGER HAS GIVEN CHANCES TO YOUNG PLAYERS AND HOPEFULLY THERE'LL BE MORE

for next season is to be a bit more of a squad player really.
HARRY: I would agree. The aim is to hopefully break into the first-team and have more of an impact on the main side. If my chance comes, I'd like to take it and prove to the manager that I deserve to be in the team.
BEN: I feel the same way. I would like to push for more games. I know I am still young but I'd like to make the other forward players feel like they've got more of a challenge and have them looking over their shoulders.

HOW HAS IT BEEN WORKING WITH JÜRGEN KLOPP?

BEN: He's the first manager I've had in senior football and I enjoy working at Melwood every day. He helps both in games and in training and he's made



Ben: Academy Players' Player of the Year

Trent: Young Player of the Season

Interview: William Hughes

me a better player this year. I'd say he's very similar to how he comes across in the media, but of course he has a serious side too. I really enjoy working with him.

WHAT ARE YOUR OVERALL AMBITIONS AT LFC?

BEN: I'd like to carry on playing for Liverpool for as long as possible and win as many trophies as I can.
HARRY: To play for this club for many years and hopefully score a lot of goals and help the team to success.
TRENT: Ultimately to captain the team has always been a dream of mine. I think every young boy would like to captain the team you grew up supporting in the area that you're from. If that were to happen at some stage, it would mean a lot to me. It's an important role and I think if I am ever ready for it and if I do ever get given it, then hopefully I will take it in my stride, push on and have some success.

When I was growing up, the captain was [Steven] Gerrard so I think that played a bit of a part in me wanting to be captain as well. I was always looking up to him and seeing him walk out every week with the armband on stuck in my mind. That inspired me to want to do the same.

WHAT WILL IT MEAN TO THE U18S TO HAVE GERRARD AS MANAGER NEXT SEASON?

TRENT: I think it will be a very good thing for the whole Academy. He's got a lot of knowledge of the game and a lot of experience, but quite recent experience as well – it's not as if it was 20 years ago, it was a couple of seasons ago when we were really close to winning the league. He's also got experience of lifting the Champions League trophy, so he has a lot of knowledge and experience about winning trophies at the club and I think the 18s will definitely have a lot of success under him.
HARRY: I think it will be massive for the younger lads, especially for the Under-16s as they become the Under-18s because it is a big step when you're that young. But having someone like Steven Gerrard to look up to and learn from every day is only going to be beneficial to them.

BEN AND HARRY, YOU'LL OBVIOUSLY HAVE AMBITIONS TO ENJOY A LONG CAREER WITH WALES AS WELL...

BEN: Definitely. I'd love to play as many games for Wales as I can and hopefully qualify for major tournaments and go as far as possible. Watching the Euros last summer, it looked amazing and it would be nice to be a part of a Wales squad enjoying that kind of success.
HARRY: It was great to see Wales do so well in the Euros last year and how well they did was a credit to everyone involved. I think that as a country now that we've had that taste of the Euros and big tournaments, we want to be there every time, so we want to do well in every qualifying campaign and ultimately reach the main tournaments, be that the Euros or the World Cup.

WATCHING STEVEN GERRARD WALKING OUT WITH THE ARMBAND INSPIRED ME

TRENT, YOU MADE YOUR PREMIER LEAGUE DEBUT AS A SUBSTITUTE IN THE 3-0 WIN AT MIDDLESBROUGH LAST DECEMBER, SO THERE WAS A NICE SYMMETRY TO ENDING THE SEASON WITH A 3-0 WIN OVER BORO AT ANFIELD TO CLINCH CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FOOTBALL...

TRENT: Definitely. It was always a positive that it was in our hands, needing to get the three points in that last match of the season at Anfield to secure the European place, and so we knew that didn't have to rely on any other results. We understood that a win would definitely get us into the Champions League and that was the motivation for everyone involved in the club. We knew it was the last game of the season and that we'd all get a nice rest after that so we could go out there, give everything we had and leave everything on that pitch.

On the afternoon, the lads did that and thankfully the result then took care of itself.



Trent and Ben at Anfield


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THE DIRK-Y DOZEN

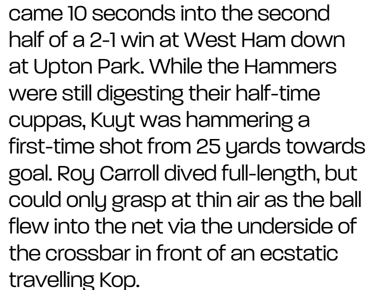
Dirk Kuyt recently announced his retirement from playing but we couldn't let him hang up his boots without paying tribute with 12 of his best goals in a Liverpool FC shirt...





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Off the mark versus the Magpies in Sept 2006



LIVERPOOL 2 NEWCASTLE 0

Premier League 20 Sept 2006

Signed from Feyenoord by Rafa Benitez in the summer of 2006, Dirk Kuyt netted 71 goals for the Reds in 285 games and his first came against the Magpies at Anfield. Xabi Alonso – who later scored from inside his own half, again – sent Steve Finnan running onto a defence-splitting pass and from the Irishman's cross Kuyt slid the ball into the Annie Road-end net with his left foot from six yards out.

LIVERPOOL 2 CHELSEA 0

Premier League 20 Jan 2007

Rafa Benitez and Jose Mourinho played their 100th Premier League matches in charge of Liverpool and Chelsea against each other and it was Kuyt who set the Redmen on their way to victory with just four minutes on the clock. Peter Crouch headed Jamie Carragher's pass into Dirk's path and after shrugging Paulo Ferreira off onto the floor he guided the ball past a wrong-footed Petr Cech as Anfield erupted.

WEST HAM 1 LIVERPOOL 2

Premier League 30 Jan 2007

Kuyt's most spectacular goal for LFC came 10 seconds into the second half of a 2-1 win at West Ham down at Upton Park. While the Hammers were still digesting their half-time cuppas, Kuyt was hammering a first-time shot from 25 yards towards goal. Roy Carroll dived full-length, but could only grasp at thin air as the ball flew into the net via the underside of the crossbar in front of an ecstatic travelling Kop.

LIVERPOOL 1 AC MILAN 2

Champions League final
23 May 2007

Among the banners on display from Kopites in ancient Greece were 'DIRK-U-LES' but the clever '**A**nd **THEN** it was **S**ix' banner had to be put away, despite Kuyt's 89th-minute header, from Daniel Agger's flick-on, giving a glimmer of hope that Milan would be on the end of another Istanbul-esque comeback. A decade on, Dirk remains the last man to score for LFC in a Champions League final.



EVERTON 1 LIVERPOOL 2

Premier League 20 Oct 2007

Having already equalised from the penalty spot – and been fortunate not to have been sent off for a flying challenge on Phil Neville – in one of the most controversial Merseyside derbies of the lot, Kuyt was given the chance to win it from the spot after Blues skipper Neville illegally kept out Lucas' goal-bound shot with both hands. It was a test of nerve that


The header against Milan in Athens



Making it one-nil against Inter

Dirk passed with flying colours as he slotted his penalty past Tim Howard to secure a much-celebrated victory.

LIVERPOOL 2 INTER MILAN 0

Champions League round of 16
19 Feb 2008

Despite the first-half dismissal of Marco Materazzi, 10-man Internazionale were proving tough nuts to crack in this first leg tie until Kuyt broke the deadlock in the 85th minute. Jermaine Pennant's cross fell to Dirk at the far post and after bringing the ball down the curly-haired Dutchman struck a half-volley into the turf that bounced over Julio Cesar into the top corner of the Kop net. Steven Gerrard's late second completed a cracking win.

LIVERPOOL 1 STANDARD LIEGE 0

Champions League qualifier
second leg 27 Aug 2008

Champions League qualifiers can be nervy affairs and after a 0-0 draw in Belgium the Reds couldn't break Liege down at Anfield either. With just two minutes of extra-time to play it seemed a penalty shoot-out was inevitable until Ryan Babel swung a hopeful cross onto into the box and Kuyt caught his marker ball-watching and snuck in at the far post to fire Liverpool into the Champions League.

MAN CITY 2 LIVERPOOL 3

Premier League 5 Oct 2008

Two-nil down to City at half-time, Fernando Torres inspired a second half comeback by netting twice to leave the scoreline poised at 2-2 as the clock ticked into stoppage time. A win would keep Rafa's Reds joint-top with Chelsea so when Torres saw a shot flick off Robbie Keane's heel to Kuyt inside the six-yard box, 3,000 travelling Kopites behind the goal collectively breathed in. The explosion of noise that followed could be heard all the way back on Merseyside.

LIVERPOOL 1 EVERTON 0

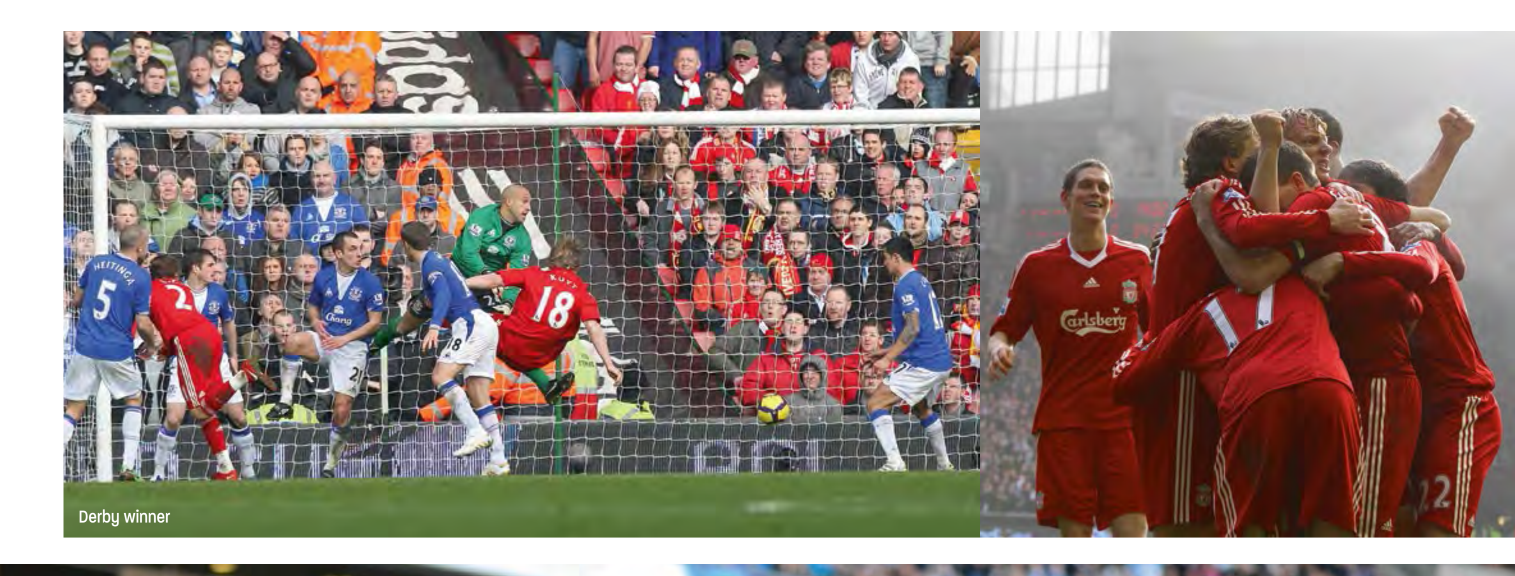
Premier League 6 Feb 2010

A 34th-minute red card for Sotirios Kyrgiakos appeared to have given Everton the perfect opportunity to win their first Merseyside derby at Anfield since 1999 but it was Kuyt who became the match-winner. Steven Gerrard whipped in a 55th-minute corner and Dirk got in front of both Tim Howard and Phil Neville to flick a header into the net. It was the fourth of five derby goals that Kuyt scored against the Blues and his first at Anfield.



In where it hurts to score v Standard Liege


Etihad avenger!



Derby winner



Dirk's poaches his third against United at Anfield in 2011

LIVERPOOL 3 MAN UNITED 1

Premier League 6 Mar 2011

Not since Peter Beardsley in 1990 had a Liverpool player netted a hat-trick against United but Kuyt changed all that with three close-range finishes against fellow countryman Edwin van der Sar. His second was a header following a mistake by Nani, his third a rebound finish from a Luis Suarez free-kick, but it was the opener that stood out due to a stunning assist by Suarez who dribbled past four United defenders and the keeper inside the penalty area before teeing up Dirk to tap-in on the goal-line.

LIVERPOOL 2 MAN UNITED 1

FA Cup fourth round 28 Jan 2012

A year earlier Kenny Dalglish had been knocked out of the FA Cup by Alex Ferguson in his first game back in charge of LFC at Old Trafford, so when the teams met again at Anfield it was a chance for revenge. Daniel Agger and Ji-Sung Park swapped goals, but it looked like a replay down the East Lancs was on the cards until Andy Carroll helped on Pepe Reina's kick and Kuyt rammed the ball underneath Edwin van der Sar. Ta-ra Fergie!

LIVERPOOL 2 CARDIFF CITY 2

League Cup final 26 Feb 2012

Dirk was just two minutes away from having a Wembley cup final winner on his CV against Cardiff City. In the 108th minute of extra-time he struck a low effort into the net – while slipping as his initial shot came back to him – only for Ben Turner to send the final to penalties with a late equaliser. Kuyt stepped up to convert the Reds' third spot-kick and, after Anthony Gerrard became the third Bluebird to miss, got his hands on his first piece of silverware as a Liverpool player.

Words: Chris McLoughlin



Cool head against Cardiff













GLORY



GIRLS



A handful of Liverpool Ladies stars are off to the Netherlands this month for the 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship – what do they think will happen?

After months of anticipation, the moment is almost here for a handful of Liverpool Ladies as they bid to shine on the European stage.

Winger Shanice van de Sanden will be hoping the future is orange as she bids to help the Netherlands meet the expectations of their nation and shine on home soil.

Attacking midfielder Caroline Weir meanwhile, is looking forward to representing Scotland as they play at the finals of a major women's tournament for the very first time. Their first fixture is a mouthwatering prospect as it will see them go head-to-head with England in a Group D showdown in Utrecht on 19 July.

In the England corner are goalkeeper Siobhan Chamberlain and defenders Casey Stoney and Alex Greenwood, who will be aiming to help the Lionesses build on their thrid place finish at the 2015 FIFA World Cup finals by going for glory. We catch up with all five Liverpool Ladies in our exclusive interviews overleaf.



SIOBHAN CHAMBERLAIN

Position: goalkeeper
Age: 33 **England caps:** 43
Liverpool games/goals: 30/0

England coach Mark Sampson sprang a surprise by naming his 23-strong squad for the tournament as early as April...
I think Mark said that he wasn't going to learn anything in six weeks that he hasn't learnt about people in the last three years. He's had a long period of time to judge and to work out the kind of people as well as the kind of players that he wants in his squad.

ENGLAND V SCOTLAND WILL BE A FANTASTIC START AND AN AMAZING ATMOSPHERE

If you're included in the squad, finding out early is great but it doesn't let you rest on your laurels. You've still got to be going into training as tough and as hard as you have been throughout pre-season and treat it as if you didn't know [you were in the squad]. You've still got to be training hard because you don't just want to be out there in the squad, you want to be out there on the pitch playing and you know that there are incredible amounts of competition within that squad.

Talking of which, there is a tough battle for the gloves between yourself, Manchester City's Karen Bardsley and Chelsea's Carly Telford...
There's the three of us in the squad and we've all been playing for our clubs so Mark could put any one of us out there and hopefully we will all be able to go out and do a job. For me, it's been about concentrating on training and working hard with Liverpool and now, since we've met up, doing the same to try and stake that claim.

Mark Sampson has been quite bullish about England's chances of success...
I think the squad have been very confident about saying we're going out there to win. Sometimes you're a bit cagey and say you'll take each game as it comes and see how it goes. But I know Mark especially has said: 'No, we're going there to win, we're good enough to win' and we know we are. It's going to be very difficult as there are some incredibly tough teams out there.

Sometimes you have that internal goal within that you want to go out there to win but you don't put yourself out there and say: 'We're going to win'. I think that's a development within the squad this time that's really good and it shows how confident we are in our own abilities as a squad and as individuals. It's having the confidence, the desire and the work-rate to put in the performances and drive forward as a team to ensure that we produce to the best of our abilities.

You open the tournament against Scotland in Utrecht on 19 July – not a bad game to begin with?!
No, it's a fantastic start to the tournament and one that I'm sure both teams will be really looking forward to. I'd imagine that there'd be a big crowd there with a lot of Scottish supporters and also a lot of English fans. I'm sure the atmosphere will be amazing and, for us, it's just important to treat it as a football match and not get drawn into the occasion. We know that we've got the quality and that if we perform on the day, we should get the result.

You obviously know Caroline Weir well...
Caroline has played fantastically well for us at Liverpool during the Spring Series, and Scotland are not a team that you can take lightly at all. They also have great players such as Lisa Evans, Jane Ross, Jen Beattie...you could keep naming them. They've got a fantastic squad and I could see them getting out of the group.

If we were both to get out of the group that would be fantastic and even though it is their first finals, they'll have no pressure on them so they can go out there and enjoy it and potentially do really well.

Do you think the gap is closing on Germany?
Yes, definitely. You can see that France have been doing fantastically well, we've beaten Germany recently and a lot of the other European teams are a lot closer to that standard now. I sometimes think back to a couple of Euros ago when you'd look at the groups and think: there's probably a couple of games there which we could win fairly comfortably and then there's a couple that are slightly more difficult, Now, there are no easy games. Every single fixture is going to be a difficult match where you've got to be on top of your game to get a win.

There should be a carnival atmosphere in the Netherlands...
You always know where the Dutch team are when you're at a tournament because they're so vibrant and bright and the orange colours stand out. They are a fantastic group of supporters to have around so if they're engaging throughout the entire tournament then that will be great. As the Netherlands is very close to England and Scotland as well, I know that both teams have a lot of supporters who are planning to come out, so hopefully they can get behind us and make some noise.

ALEX GREENWOOD

Position: left-back **Age:** 23 **England caps:** 23 **Liverpool games/goals:** 19/3

Can England win the Euros?
Yes, absolutely. Why not? I'm confident and I know the team is confident. We have to be realistic and at this present moment we are still in the building phase getting to where we need to be. We've got a lot of tasks that we need to tick off the list to be ready for gold. But we're on track, we're doing really well, the players are fit and strong and we'll go into the next couple of weeks and nail things down week-by-week in terms of what we want to achieve, and then go to Holland with the aim of bringing home the trophy. I don't see why we can't do that. The talent in this England squad is more than capable of matching everyone in Europe at the moment.

The She Believes Cup in March was a valuable experience for the squad [England finished third in a quadrangular tournament involving winners France, Germany and USA]...
Yes and I felt we more than matched the two European teams. We were disappointed in the end with the France game [France won 2-1 thanks to a goal in added time]. I was injured at the time but sat at home and

THIS ENGLAND SQUAD IS MORE THAN CAPABLE OF MATCHING EVERYONE IN EUROPE

watched the game. In the first half we absolutely outplayed them, but in the second half I think there was a turn and they probably had the better of the game. But it just shows how far we've come. I think two, three, four years ago, we'd have just gone in there looking for a draw but now we go into those games fully confident that we're going to win.

Astonishingly, Germany have won the last six EURO tournaments – can anybody stop them?
Their record is absolutely incredible but anybody can be beaten in a cup competition – it's who turns up on the day. You aim to deliver, you aim to win and then you go through to the next stage and if you don't do those things, you're going home. That's competition football so we've got to be on our game. In every match we've got to be prepared properly and go into it with the mentality that we can win the game.

You start the tournament with a tasty fixture against Scotland...
We're all looking forward to it and we can't wait to get started. We were saying the other day that it's ridiculous how close the game is now. I'm looking forward to playing against Scotland. It's a derby and you can forget talent – that goes out of the window. On the day it's about who wants to win the game the most.

There's not been too much banter with Caz [Caroline Weir] but we've thrown a few things her way!
Caz is a brilliant player and I'm sure that she will have a big influence in Scotland's squad at the Euros and I hope they do really well but just not in that first game! It's a great way for us to start the tournament and an incentive for the fans to come out and watch it and be entertained by a derby and see a fantastic game full of talented players.

Ticket sales have been going well so the tournament should be quite a spectacle...
It should be brilliant. I can't wait to get to Holland. We will be fully focused on the task ahead and I can't wait to get there and show the country what we are made of.





CASEY STONEY

Position: centre-back **Age:** 35
England caps: 130 **Liverpool games/goals:** 7/0

England will be among the favourites after winning the bronze medal at the FIFA World Cup in Canada in 2015...
We'll be going into the Euros with the biggest expectation on ourselves we've ever had. We came home with a bronze from the World Cup, so semi-final, final, is what you'd probably be expecting from a Euros Championship. But there's a lot of good teams in the tournament.

How do you rate your group?
We've got a tough group [with Scotland, Spain and Portugal] but it could have been a lot harder. We've just got to go there as fit as we've ever been and you also need to have a little bit of luck in a tournament to go to the latter stages. But we need to win the group. That's vital to make sure that the draw is kind to us on the other side. We've got as good a chance of any team there.

Will being one of the favourites bring extra pressure?
Going there as one of the favourites brings with it great expectation and with that comes pressure and it's about how the squad handles that pressure. I see it as a massive opportunity for us to go there and be successful and keep changing the face of women's football in this country. Then hopefully my little girl and her generation will grow up with far more opportunities than my generation had when we were growing up.

SHANICE VAN DE SANDEN

Position: winger **Age:** 24
Holland caps: 37 **Liverpool games/goals:** 29/3

A 'home' Euros – you must be looking forward to it?
I'm really excited. For the last few months I was focused on the games at Liverpool but now I can look to the Euros. I flew back to see my family for one day before we went to the training camp and was excited to see the girls and train and play with them. So yes, I can't wait!

You start the tournament with a home game against Norway in your home town of Utrecht...
I'm really excited for that first game. Norway will be a tough match as they were beaten finalists in 2013 and we have a tough group with Denmark and Belgium too, but I'm sure it will be a very exciting occasion.

Since the start of 2017 the team has been coached by national team legend Sarina Wiegman...
She's a really good coach but the coach before that [Arjan van der Laan] was a good coach as well. But I think Sarina knows us well and understands a lot about the opponents that we will play against, so she is a good manager for the squad. I know she is very excited about the tournament as well.

You have a strong attack with players such as yourself, Lieke Martens and Vivianne Miedema...
We have great forwards but I think the whole squad is very strong so hopefully we will play good football and that is important for our supporters. Because we are playing at home, there will be loads of people and it should be very colourful. They'll be singing and getting behind us.

How well can the Netherlands do at this tournament?
We want to go as far as we can but we need to look at it game by game. The first match is really important and then if that game is won, we can look to the second game against Denmark and then the match against Belgium in Tilburg and so on.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE PLAY GOOD FOOTBALL IN FRONT OF OUR OWN SUPPORTERS

Can the competition leave a lasting legacy for women's football in the Netherlands?
If the performances are right, it can be really important for our country because then the women's football league will be of greater interest to other players as well. That is what happened in England when they were third in the World Cup a couple of years ago. There was a big thing in England after that. I hope it will be the same case in the Netherlands too.





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CAROLINE WEIR

Position: midfielder **Age:** 22 **Scotland caps:** 35 **Liverpool games/goals:** 30/13

How excited are you at representing Scotland at their first Euro finals?
Really excited. It will probably be the biggest women's Euro tournament there's ever been, so that's only going to be a positive thing for us. Lots of people are going to come over from Scotland and it's going to be a cool event. I think there will be a good atmosphere and I'm sure the Netherlands will do the whole tournament really well.

Your opening game is against England...
I don't think you could ask for a better game on such an occasion as our first fixture in a major tournament. We're excited for that and the fact that it's against England just adds to the sense of occasion. We'll prepare for that in the best way and I think it will be enjoyable just to be involved. Obviously we want to win but we'll see what happens.

Have you had much training-ground banter with the England girls?
You know, we've not really spoken about it too much and as it's got closer I feel like we've been keeping a bit more quiet! There has been a bit of banter as everyone knows the teams so well as we play against each other every week in the different teams in the FA WSL so it will be interesting to see what happens. I think everyone's just looking forward to it now.

There is plenty of experience in the Scotland squad...
Our captain Gemma Fay is a prime example. Gemma's been in the squad for years, and she's our leader and comes with a lot of experience. Winning 100 caps is great achievement but she is about to win her 200th which is phenomenal. We've got players in top leagues in the different countries and you can see that. Hopefully that can help us to do well in the Netherlands.

We understand a few of your Liverpool Ladies team-mates are flying out to see a few of the England and Scotland games...
Yes, there are quite a few of the girls coming over to watch as well as family and friends too. I think there will be decent crowds at most of the games which will add to it and we're obviously excited. It will be cool to see some of the Liverpool girls over there as well.

You have recent Euros history with Spain, having lost to them in in extra-time of the 2013 play-off...
I wasn't in the squad at the time but in that play-off for the last Euros they scored in the last minute of extra-time which was tough to take. We've played Spain since then and we know quite a few of their players and the fact that they're a quality side. That will be another tough test for us but hopefully we can win against them.

Portugal are also first-time Euro finalists...
Portugal will be another decent team. I don't think there's going to be an easy game out there. We've played Portugal a couple of times in friendlies too so we know what they're about, but it's a different kind of situation when you go to a competitive tournament and are playing tournament football. It will be interesting but hopefully we can do well against them as well.

But we're not looking too far ahead. We're just looking at the England game and when it comes to it, we'll just take each game as it comes along. We've not really got much pressure on us. We know what we're about so we'll see what happens with the first game and take it from there.

Words: William Hughes

The schedule...

Netherlands' Group A schedule
16 July Netherlands v Norway (Utrecht)
20 July Netherlands v Denmark (Rotterdam)
24 July Belgium v Netheralnds (Tilburg)

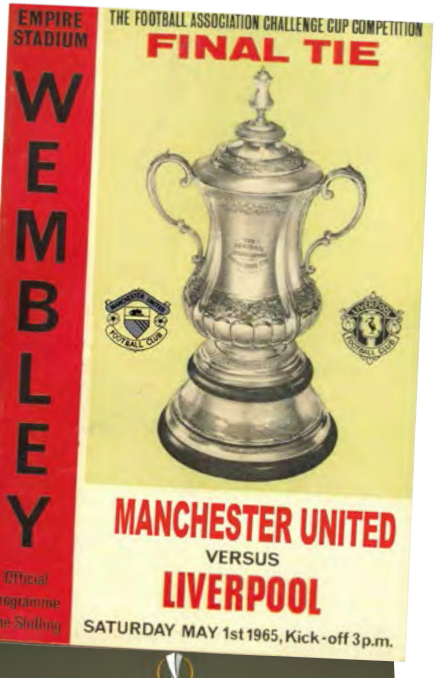
England's Group D schedule
19 July England v Scotland (Utrecht)
23 July England v Spain (Breda)
27 July Portugal v England (Tilburg)

Scotland's Group D schedule
19 July England v Scotland (Utrecht)
23 July Scotland v Portugal (Rotterdam)
27 July Scotland v Spain (Deventer)

Quarter-finals: **29 July** and **30 July**
Semi-finals: **3 August**
Final: **6 August** (Enschede)

Alt. finals

Sliding Doors time: looking back, what if those other semi-finals had gone differently...who would the Reds have played instead?

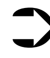


Remember when Liverpool beat Dundee United in the European Cup final? Or that glorious Wembley day when the Reds clinched a first League and FA Cup double against Sheffield Wednesday? How about that incredible Istanbul comeback against PSV Eindhoven?

Of course you don't, because they never happened. But they could've done.

We've gone all *Sliding Doors* (you know, Gwyneth Paltrow getting on/not getting on the train) this month and taken a look at who Liverpool's opponents would've been in each of their cup finals had the other semi-final – or qualifying final for the European Super Cup and World Club Cup – finished differently.

Would the Reds still have won as many pots? Would they have won even more? Nobody will ever know for sure, but there's no harm in imagining what could've been...



Alternative FA Cup finals


Norwich were beaten semi-finalists in 1992

1914	**Liverpool v ~~Burnley~~ Sheffield United**
1950	**Liverpool v ~~Arsenal~~ Chelsea**
1965	**Liverpool v ~~Leeds United~~ Manchester United**
1971	**Liverpool v ~~Arsenal~~ Stoke City**
1974	**Liverpool v ~~Newcastle United~~ Burnley**
1977	**Liverpool v ~~Manchester United~~ Leeds United**
1986	**Liverpool v ~~Everton~~ Sheffield Wednesday**
1988	**Liverpool v ~~Wimbledon~~ Luton Town**
1989	**Liverpool v ~~Everton~~ Norwich City**
1992	**Liverpool v ~~Sunderland~~ Norwich City**
1996	**Liverpool v ~~Manchester United~~ Chelsea**
2001	**Liverpool v ~~Arsenal~~ Tottenham Hotspur**
2006	**Liverpool v ~~West Ham United~~ Middlesbrough**
2012	**Liverpool v ~~Chelsea~~ Tottenham Hotspur**

Liverpool have won seven and lost seven of their 14 FA Cup finals, with two of the victories against Everton at Wembley. But had the Blues' semi-final results gone the other way, there would never have been an all-Merseyside encounter to decide the world's oldest football competition.

Instead Kenny Dalglish's Reds would have had to beat Sheffield Wednesday to clinch a first League and FA Cup double in 1986 – and with Howard Wilkinson's Owls having held the Reds twice and finished fifth in the First Division, perhaps that wouldn't have been so simple.

Norwich City could have been our opponents in the post-Hillsborough final of 1989, but given the events in Sheffield it couldn't have been more appropriate that Liverpool and Everton spent the afternoon together with chants of 'Merseyside, Merseyside' ringing around Wembley.

The Canaries also lost a semi-final to Sunderland in 1992 – missing out on another Wembley date with Liverpool.



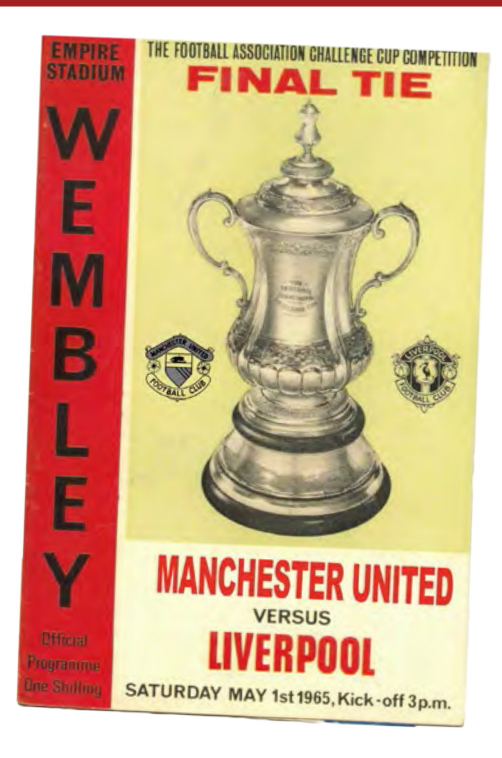
LFC, of course, were famously led to a first Wembley triumph by Bill Shankly against Leeds United in 1965. Yet Don Revie's team only made the final courtesy of an 89th-minute semi-final replay winner against Matt Busby's Manchester United. Imagine what a Shankly v Busby Wembley showdown would've been like, given United had already won the First Division and Liverpool were chasing that elusive first FA Cup!

Liverpool had lost both previous FA Cup final appearances by that point. Burnley were favourites to win in 1914 and did so 1-0. But perhaps things could've been different had Sheffield United lain in wait at the Crystal Palace as Tom Watson's Reds beat the Blades 2-1 at Anfield just 48 hours later in a rearranged league match.

In 1950 it was Arsenal who broke Kopite hearts with a 2-0 success, yet they had needed a replay in the semi-final to beat a Chelsea side that finished five places below Liverpool and probably wouldn't have given Billy Liddell the infamous kicking he received from the Gunners that day.

Newcastle were "undressed", as commentator David Coleman put it, in the 1974 final and the chances are that beaten semi-finalists Burnley wouldn't have stopped the Bill Shankly boys either that year, while it would've been Leeds, rather than Man United, trying to dent Bob Paisley's treble-bid in 1977 and the Elland Roaders aren't as well-known for jammy deflections!

Speaking of FA Cup final defeats, Liverpool's 1988 loss to Wimbledon is still regarded as one of the competition's biggest shocks, but if the Crazy Gang hadn't made it to the final it would've been Luton Town in opposition instead. The Hatters had knocked the Reds out of the FA Cup 3-0 on their controversial plastic pitch in 1987, but King Kenny's men were always better on grass.



Then there's 1996 against United on a day when every Liverpudlian wishes Chelsea had reached Wembley instead; while in 2001 Gerard Houllier's treble-chasers would still have faced North London opposition in Cardiff as Arsenal beat Tottenham in the other semi-final. Not that you'd want to change that last 10 minutes at the Millennium Stadium!

More recently Rafa's Reds could've met with Middlesbrough rather than West Ham in the 2006 final, which the Premier League table suggests would've been an easier game. But in 2012 Dalglish's Liverpool would've still had their work cut out had Tottenham beaten Chelsea in the other semi as Spurs won 4-0 at White Hart Lane and drew 0-0 at Anfield that season.

But then, as the cliche goes, the formbook goes out of the window in the FA Cup and Spurs only win trophies when the year ends in one...



Alternative League Cup finals

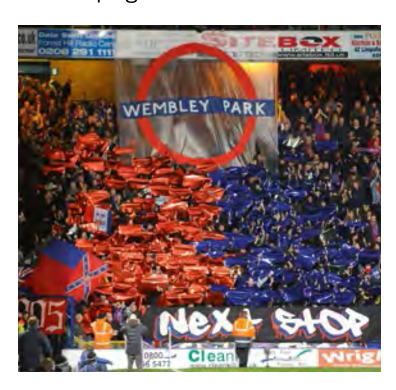

At one point Everton were 3-1 up on aggregate in their 2016 semi

1977/78 Liverpool v ~~Nottingham Forest~~ Leeds United
1981 Liverpool v ~~West Ham United~~ Coventry City
1982 Liverpool v ~~Tottenham Hotspur~~ West Bromwich Albion
1983 Liverpool v ~~Manchester United~~ Arsenal
1984 Liverpool v ~~Everton~~ Aston Villa
1987 Liverpool v ~~Arsenal~~ Tottenham Hotspur
1995 Liverpool v ~~Bolton Wanderers~~ Swindon Town
2001 Liverpool v ~~Birmingham City~~ Ipswich Town
2003 Liverpool v ~~Manchester United~~ Blackburn Rovers
2005 Liverpool v ~~Chelsea~~ Manchester United
2012 Liverpool v ~~Cardiff City~~ Crystal Palace
2016 Liverpool v ~~Manchester City~~ Everton

Having won the Football League Cup a record eight times – three more than any other club – we'll quite happily keep Liverpool FC's cup final statistics as they are.

Yes, a 1978 final against Leeds instead of Nottingham Forest would've been easier – Brian Clough's side also won the First Division that year and European Cups in 1979 and 1980. But the Reds' four-in-a-row between 1981 and 1984 against West Ham, Tottenham, Manchester United and Everton remains an outstanding achievement that wouldn't necessarily have been better – or happened – had beaten semi-finalists Coventry City, West Bromwich Albion, Arsenal and Aston Villa made those finals.

Liverpool had never lost when Ian Rush had scored until the 1987 final defeat to Arsenal, so perhaps a shoot-out with Tottenham's Clive Allen would've gone better had they beaten the Gunners in the last four; while it seems highly likely that Roy Evans' Reds would still have lifted the trophy in 1995 as Swindon Town – alternative opponents to Bolton Wanderers – were relegated from Division One that season despite ex-LFC midfielder Steve McMahon taking over as manager halfway through the campaign.



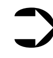
Ipswich Town would certainly have been a tougher task than First Division Birmingham in the 2001 final. George Burley was named as Manager of the Year for leading the Tractor Boys to fifth in the Premier League that season and they also won 1-0 at Anfield, making them the type of side that could've put a pitchfork in the wheels of Gerard Houllier's treble-winning cup side.

Beating Manchester United in Cardiff in 2003, with Steven Gerrard opening the scoring, was surely more enjoyable than defeating a Blackburn Rovers side managed by Graeme Souness would've been (no offence Souey). And Alex Ferguson's Red Devils would also have been opponents for Rafa's first cup final as LFC boss in 2005 had they not been beaten in the semi-final by Jose Mourinho's Chelsea. Either way, it was always going to be some final in 2005!



Liverpool's most recent League Cup success came on penalties in 2012 against Championship outfit Cardiff City – which was perhaps fortunate as bogey team Crystal Palace would've lined up against the Reds had they won the semi-final – and in 2016 Jürgen Klopp's side were beaten on spot-kicks in Liverpool's only-ever cup final against Manchester City.

City had lost the first leg of their semi-final 2-1 at Everton and conceded first in the second leg only to turn things around to deny a fourth all-Merseyside cup final. Which was a shame as the other three all ended pretty well!



Alternative European Cup finals

1977 Liverpool v ~~Borussia Moenchengladbach~~ Dynamo Kiev
1978 Liverpool v ~~Bruges~~ Juventus
1981 Liverpool v ~~Real Madrid~~ Inter Milan
1984 Liverpool v ~~AS Roma~~ Dundee United
1985 Liverpool v ~~Juventus~~ Bordeaux
2005 Liverpool v ~~AC Milan~~ PSV Eindhoven
2007 Liverpool v ~~AC Milan~~ Manchester United

Forty years on it somehow seems inconceivable that Liverpool could've played any other club than Borussia Moenchengladbach in the 1977 European Cup final, especially given the friendship that has subsequently developed between the two sets of supporters. But had Dynamo Kiev been able to hold on to their 1-0 semi-final first-leg lead the Soviet champions would've been on the same pitch in Rome.

With 1975 European Footballer of the Year Oleh Blokhin (who scored a record 266 goals for Kiev and a record 42 for the Soviet Union) upfront they'd have been a tough proposition too, having already ended Bayern Munich's three-year dominance of the competition in the quarter-finals. But they crashed out to Gladbach in the last four to ensure Joey Jones wasn't chewing chicken kiev on that famous banner!

Bob Paisley's men successfully defended their title against what was, in truth, an average Bruges side at Wembley in 1978 after the Belgians surprisingly beat Juventus in extra-time of their semi-final second leg. It was a result that almost certainly gave Liverpool an easier final given Turin's Old Lady were Serie A champions again in 78 having only lost one game all season.

You couldn't say that about 1981, however, when the semi-final line-up was as strong as could be. While a

Milan's Maldini v PSV's Park Ji-Sung in 2005

depleted Liverpool were famously knocking out Bayern Munich on away-goals, Real Madrid were being beaten 1-0 in the San Siro by Inter Milan but scraped through by virtue of their 2-0 first-leg lead. Had Inter prevailed, the pre-match build up would inevitably have centred around Liverpool's controversial European Cup semi-final exit to the Italians in 1965, setting up what may well have been a more feisty encounter than the 1-0 victory against Real proved to be in 'Gay Paree'.

Perhaps the most unlikely final of all, though, could've occurred in 1984 when Scottish Champions Dundee United were robbed of facing Joe Fagan's Liverpool in Rome.

Jim McLean's Tangerines beat Roma 2-0 in their semi-final first leg at Tannadice but were defeated 3-0 in the second leg in the Stadio Olimpico with a controversial penalty deciding the tie. It subsequently transpired in 2011 that Roma had bribed French referee Michel Vautrot.

"Roma gave a middle-man 100 million lire [£50,000] destined for referee Vautrot," admitted Roma director Riccardo Viola, son of late club president Dino Viola. "That is true and a shameful fact."

Liverpool went on to beat Roma in their own backyard on penalties, but tragedy followed a decade later when sweeper Agostino Di Bartolomei – who successfully converted his spot-kick past wobbly-legged Bruce Grobbelaar in the shoot-out – committed suicide on the tenth anniversary of Liverpool's victory, having suffered from depression.

There was was also a tragedy in 1985. Thirty-nine people – 32 from Italy, four from Belgium, two from France and one from Northern Ireland – were killed inside Brussels' Heysel Stadium when a wall collapsed during crowd trouble before the European Cup final kicked off on that shameful night. For the record, Bordeaux were the team Juve beat in their semi-final.

It was another 20 years before Liverpool reached another European Cup final – by then rebranded the Champions League – and none of you need reminding what happened in Istanbul. Yet AC Milan only just made it to Turkey.

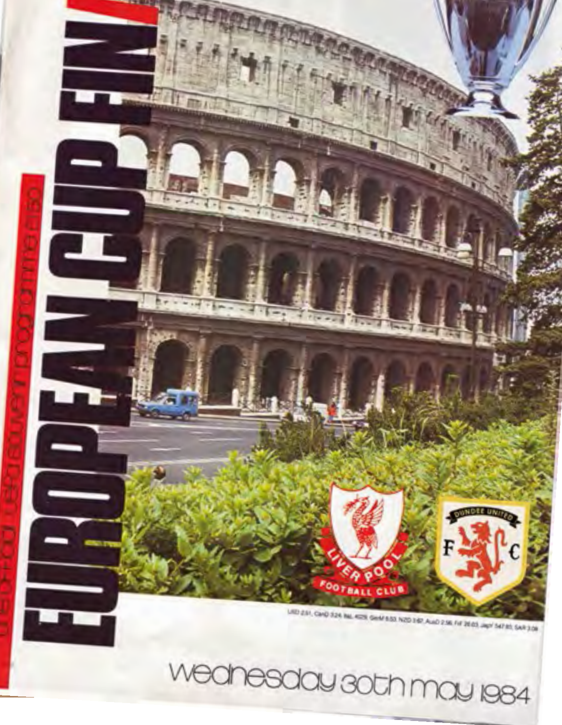
PSV Eindhoven wiped out their 2-0 semi-final first-leg advantage in 65 minutes in Holland only for Milan's Massimo Ambrosini's 91st-minute header to send the Italians through – but only on away-goals after Philip Cocu then scored with 92 minutes on the clock.

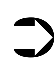
Perhaps PSV wouldn't have raced into a three-goal half-time lead in the Ataturk Stadium. But had the final gone to penalties Liverpool would've faced Heurelho Gomes who has since gone to save a Premier League-record nine penalties in five seasons with Spurs and Watford!

Of course Milan gained revenge two years later in Athens, but only after knocking out Manchester United 5-3 on aggregate in the semi-final. The Reds had lost both Premier League games to United that season, finishing 21 points behind them as they won the league. Still, we would've had an opportunity to win a sixth European Cup against our greatest rivals...or see them lift a third European Cup right in front of us.

As winner-takes-all games go, it would've been the ultimate Liverpool versus Manchester United clash and you never know, it could yet happen in 2018 when the venue for the Champions League final just happens to be Kiev...

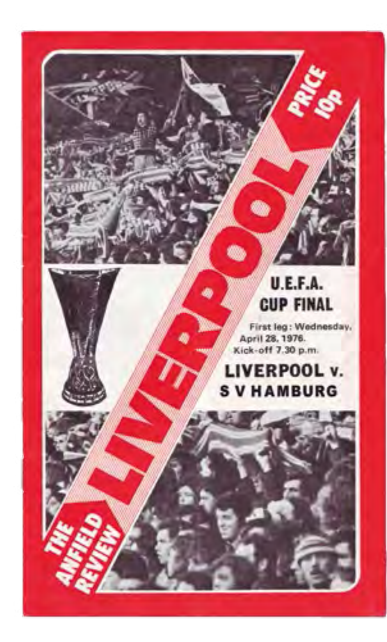






Alternative UEFA Cup finals

1973 Liverpool v ~~Borussia Moenchengladbach~~ FC Twente
1976 Liverpool v ~~Bruges~~ SV Hamburg
2001 Liverpool v ~~Alaves~~ Kaiserslautern
2016 Liverpool v ~~Sevilla~~ Shakhtar Donetsk





The UEFA Cup, aka the Europa League, gets unfavourably compared to the Champions League these days, but no Kopite should underestimate the importance of winning it in 1973, 1976 and 2001.

Not only did those successes under Bill Shankly, Bob Paisley and Gerard Houllier serve to establish – then re-establish – Liverpool's name and reputation as a force on the continent, it's no co-incidence that many of the players in those squads went on to win European Cups with the Reds in the years that followed. Winning the UEFA Cup gave them the belief and know-how to do so.

Before beating Borussia Moenchengladbach and Bruges in European Cup finals, Liverpool defeated both over two legs in UEFA Cup finals. Gladbach beat Holland's FC Twente in their 1973 semi-final – convincingly – and it's probable that Paisley's Reds would've done the same. But 1976 could've been rather challenging.

An emerging SV Hamburg side, that finished second to Gladbach in the Bundesliga and won the German Cup, reached the last four of the UEFA Cup but lost out to Bruges by virtue of an 85th-minute Manfred Kaltz own-goal in the second leg in Belgium. That denied Kevin Keegan an opportunity to play against the club he would move to in the summer of 1977 while it's also worth mentioning that in 1983 Kaltz was the only member of Hamburg's class of 76 who played in their European Cup final victory against Juventus.

Liverpool were back in Germany in 2001 for a UEFA Cup final against Alaves that finished 5-4 after a golden own-goal in extra time. Had Kaiserslautern progressed to that final in Dortmund it's hard to imagine it would've been so crazy, but then as Alaves had thrashed the Germans 9-2 on aggregate in the semi its not like we were ever close to finding out.

Which brings us to Basel 2016 and the 3-1 defeat to Sevilla, who clinched their third Europa League success in a row. Ukrainian Premier League runners-up Shakhtar Donetsk could've been LFC's opponents had Sevilla stumbled in the semi-final, but they didn't. So while a first-ever UEFA Cup final defeat was tough to take, history suggests that just reaching it is a sign that Liverpool are on an upward trajectory.



Alternative European Cup Winners' Cup final

1966 Liverpool v ~~Borussia Dortmund~~ West Ham United

West Ham United won the Cup Winners Cup in 1965 so got the opportunity to defend it in 1966 with FA Cup winners Liverpool taking part for the first time. But for Borussia Dortmund, the Reds and Hammers would've met in the final at Hampden Park.

BVB won their semi-final 5-2 on aggregate, but what a final it could've been with six members of England's 1966 World Cup squad – Roger Hunt, Ian Callaghan, Gerry Byrne, Bobby Moore, Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters – all lining up a month before the tournament kicked off!

Of course Dortmund went on to defeat the Reds in Glasgow, but who would have lifted the trophy if Bill Shankly and Ron Greenwood's sides had met? Liverpool won the league in 1966, West Ham finished 12th and LFC won 5-1 at Upton Park with Hunt getting a hat-trick. You do the maths.

Alternative UEFA Super Cup finals

The UEFA Super Cup was contested by the winners of the European Cup and the Cup Winners' Cup between 1972 and 1999 before the UEFA Cup winners got involved after the CWC was scrapped. It also became a one-off match rather than a two-legged home-and-away clash following the changes.

So, instead of Kevin Keegan's Anfield return in 1977 with Hamburg the Reds would've faced Anderlecht, beaten finalists in the CWC final; and instead of Anderlecht in 1978, Austria Vienna would've been in town.

Fixture congestion meant Liverpool and Juventus only met in Turin in 1985 – but it could've been Porto had things been different – while the Reds' encounters with Bayern Munich (2001) and CSKA Moscow (2005) in Monaco would've been against Valencia and Sporting of Portugal had they not blown leads in the previous season's finals.

Three wins from five isn't a bad record, though, and the most important thing about the Super Cup is qualifying for it in the first place.

1977 Liverpool v ~~SV Hamburg~~ Anderlecht
1978 Liverpool v ~~Anderlecht~~ Austria Vienna
1985 Liverpool v ~~Juventus~~ FC Porto
2001 Liverpool v ~~Bayern Munich~~ Valencia
2005 Liverpool v ~~CSKA Moscow~~ Sporting Clube de Portugal


Cisse and 2005 Super Cup



Would we have beaten Valencia in 2001?

Liverpool's balloon was burst against Flamengo in 1981

1981 Liverpool v ~~Flamengo~~ Cobreloa
1984 Liverpool v ~~Independiente~~ Gremio
2005 Liverpool v ~~Sao Paulo~~ Al-Ittihad

Alternative Club World Cup finals

Considering Liverpool failed to win the Club World Cup – aka the Intercontinental Cup/Club World Championship – in each of the finals they have contested, perhaps facing different opponents would've helped. But it's fair to say the Reds didn't take the trips to Tokyo in 1981 and 84 as seriously as they could've done.

Back then it was simply the champions of Europe versus the champions of South America. Brazil's Zico-inspired Flamengo ran out 3-0 winners in 81, having qualified by beating Chile's Cobreloa in the Copa Libertadores [South America's Champions League]; while in 84 it was Independiente of Argentina that defeated the Reds 1-0, the same scoreline by which they'd won the Copa Libertadores against Brazil's Gremio (the club Lucas was signed from).



Things were different when Liverpool took part again in 2005. Six teams – the champions of each FIFA confederation – took part with Benitez's European champions beating Costa Rica's Deportivo Saprissa 3-0 in the semi-final to set up a final clash with Brazil's Sao Paulo, who beat Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad 3-2 in their last-four match.

No club based outside of Europe or South America has even won the competition, which would've boded well for us had Al-Ittihad progressed, and perhaps a trophy that has never been to Anfield could finally have been placed on the sideboard. In the actual final Sao Paulo beat Liverpool 1-0, but only after Florent Sinama-Pongolle had a late equaliser wrongly disallowed.



Rafael Benitez and Steven Gerrard in 2005

Words: Chris McLoughlin

Neil Mellor

Bringing in Salah so early gives him time to settle in

Mohamed Salah is an exciting signing for Liverpool Football Club.

When Sadio Mane was missing last year, Jürgen Klopp's side lacked a bit of pace. That won't be an issue next season as Salah has pace in abundance. Like Mane, one of his main strengths is his acceleration and that is going to cause defenders all kinds of problems, but the settling-in process is going to be important for the Egyptian international.

Just like he did with Mane last summer, Klopp has managed to bring Salah in very early. I've always believed that if you're going to sign someone – and you really, really want them – get them in as soon as possible when the transfer window is open so they can understand what is expected from the manager, can settle into the group and get to know the players they will be playing alongside. It is also important for Salah to understand what playing for Liverpool involves.

He is now at the biggest football club he's ever played for. When he goes away with the squad to Asia in pre-season and sees the welcome from fanatical supporters, he will think to himself: wow, this is different. Getting used to the added focus and pressure can take time.

Salah tended to play on the right for Roma, the same side Mane normally operates on, but he is a left-footed player who is effective anywhere in the final third and was also used centrally by the Italians. I think Klopp will fit both Salah and Mane into his side because their combined pace will scare the life out of Premier League defenders. That's going to make Liverpool a huge threat going forward and even more effective at quickly turning defence into attack.

Because Mane made an immediate impact last year there may be some who judge Salah's first season against what the Senegalese forward achieved, but such comparisons would be unfair. Serie A may not be as competitive as the Premier League but Salah really stood out for Roma. He created chances and scored goals, something we want to see in a red shirt. But he has to be given an opportunity to settle at Anfield without too much expectation from fans despite his price tag.

One thing we can expect is Klopp's side to be more tactically flexible and for players to be rotated more often. Divock Origi was LFC's top appearance-maker in 2016/17 playing in 43 games but that's a long way short of the 59 appearances Simon Mignolet made in 2015/16 as the Reds reached the League Cup and Europa League finals.

We want to see a Liverpool side that is competitive both domestically and in Europe and that will require Klopp to vary both his tactics and team selections. Whether certain players are used in particular competitions compared to others remains to be seen, but Klopp also needs a squad that is strong enough to cope with the extra games and inevitable injuries.

THE COMBINED PACE OF SALAH AND MANE WILL SCARE THE LIFE OUT OF DEFENDERS

He lost key players such as Mane, Coutinho, Lallana, Henderson, Sturridge, Matip and Lovren at various times last season. To remain competitive you've got to have strength-in-depth so I fully expect further arrivals in addition to Salah and Dominic Solanke before the campaign kicks off at Watford.

August is a massive month for LFC. We're all delighted that the Reds finished in the top four, but the job of qualifying for the Champions League isn't done yet. Can you imagine how deflating it would feel if Liverpool failed to reach the group stages after all that hard work last year?

The primary focus has to be getting through the two-legged qualifier but not at the expense of a poor start in the Premier League. Beginning last season with wins at Arsenal and Chelsea set the tone for the games against direct opponents, and next season two of our first four games are against Arsenal and Manchester City.

Liverpool's unbeaten record against those sides competing for a top-four spot was a huge factor in why Arsenal and Manchester United were pipped to fourth place, but now those type of results will have to be earned in addition to hopefully qualifying for the Champions League group stage.

The arrival of exciting signings such as Mo Salah will be vital to ensure that happens. A strong squad is imperative for Liverpool to have a successful 2017/18.



Salah in the Anfield dressing-room

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Roger Hunt celebrates an England goal in the 1966 World Cup final. Against which team did he score twice in the Three Lions' final group game? **Answer on page 98**

World class display, Anfield latest, LFC Foundation and the must-have merchandise







A KNIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

'Sir' Roger Hunt calls in at Anfield to drop off his 1966 England World Cup winner's medal



One of Liverpool FC's greatest goalscorers recently returned to Anfield to look at a new display which celebrates one of his finest days.

Roger Hunt MBE, who turns 79 on 20 July, scored an incredible 286 goals in 492 matches for the Reds between 1959 and 1969.

But one of the greatest moments of his career came in 1966 when he helped England to victory in the World Cup final.

Although Geoff Hurst hit the headlines with a hat-trick as England overcame West Germany 4-2 after extra-time, manager Alf Ramsey later paid tribute to Hunt for helping create the space for Hurst to exploit.

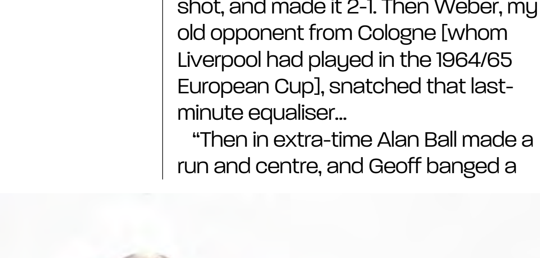
Hunt, who was recognised at Liverpool FC's 2017 Player of the Year evening with a Lifetime Achievement Award, met LFC museum curator Stephen Done at Anfield to return his precious 1966 World Cup winner's medal to the venue. The medal spent most of last year being shown at the National Football Museum where it was displayed alongside the Jules Rimet trophy. It now forms part of a display in the museum at Anfield which also features one of Roger's England jerseys and caps.

"It is thought to be the only 1966 World Cup medal on permanent public display and it has been a central part of the LFC Museum since 1999," said Done. "It was a great honour to welcome Roger and his wife Rowan to Anfield to place it back on display for all to enjoy."

Hunt played in all six of England's games in the 1966 tournament, scoring three times. He became the first Liverpool FC player to win the World Cup, and Anfield team-mates Ian Callaghan and Gerry Byrne were also part of that victorious squad.

In his 1969 biography *Hunt For Goals*, he wrote of the final: "I could fill this book with the story of that one match. I can remember almost every kick...

"Germany scored first, through Haller, after Ray Wilson's one mistake of the competition. Hurst put us level with a header from Moore's free-kick,



and with 12 minutes left Martin Peters just beat me to a rebound, off a Hurst shot, and made it 2-1. Then Weber, my old opponent from Cologne [whom Liverpool had played in the 1964/65 European Cup], snatched that last-minute equaliser...

"Then in extra-time Alan Ball made a run and centre, and Geoff banged a shot in off the bar. I was nearest the ball as it came down, and saw it was behind the line, so I was frightened out of my wits when I turned round and saw the referee going over to the linesman to make sure.

"We had to wait what seemed like hours before he pointed to the middle. I think Weber and the other defenders nearby knew the ball had gone in, but some of the others further away made a fuss about it until the captain, Seeler, pulled them away and told them to get on with the game. That was another gesture which shows international sport need not be all bitterness.

"Then, with the last kick, Geoff smashed a beauty past Tilkowski and it was all over. We had won. Everyone went wild, some jumping around, others babbling away as if they would never stop. I was in a daze as I collected my medal from the Queen and went on the lap of honour. Wembley suddenly seemed miles wide as I went round the pitch with the other lads, players and reserves, while the crowd screamed our names – and that of Alf Ramsey.

"On the way back to Hendon Hall, and then on to Kensington for the banquet, we would not let that little trophy out of sight. After all the effort, we had pulled it off.

"And it was worthwhile!"



The pitch being re-laid

Pitch perfect

A new playing surface is among several Anfield improvements taking place this summer



The hallowed turf

By the time Anfield hosts its first home league game of next season, against Crystal Palace on Saturday 19 August 2017, the stadium's playing surface will be in pristine condition following a series of improvements over the summer.

The changes will see a new automatic irrigation system installed to help improve drainage from the pitch; this will allow the surface to be watered prior to kick-off in under three minutes, with drainage speeded up especially in wetter months.

In addition, a new undersoil heating system has been put in place which will help aid growth and also prevent the ground from freezing during the winter months.

Andrew Parkinson, LFC's operations director, describes the renovation as "a major piece of work which the whole team are really excited about ahead of the new season. This is another significant investment at Anfield, making further important

GREEN PARTY: ANFIELD STATS

- Over 19 miles of pipeline will be installed under the pitch as part of the new undersoil heating system.
- Eight heat and moisture sensors installed to help monitor the best growing environment for the pitch.
- Over 40,000 km of artificial grass fibres – the equivalent of the Earth's circumference – will be stitched into the layers of sand beneath the pitch, which will be composed of 97 per cent organic grass and three per cent artificial grass fibres.
- Over half-a-ton of grass seed will be sown into the pitch, producing approximately 250 million grass plants each with around five leaves – meaning that Philippe Coutinho and co will be playing on approximately 1.25 billion individual blades of grass.
- The club uses Dwarf Perennial Ryegrass, the strongest and most hard-wearing for sports pitches.
- Once grown, the pitch at Anfield is cut and tended to daily.
- Ground staff use 12 large grow lights and three small grow lights to cultivate the grass. One includes a tent which can be used over the goalmouth where the temperature and humidity can be controlled to speed up growth.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE ULTIMATE FAN EXPERIENCE AT ANFIELD

improvements that will ensure our players have the best playing surface for the seasons ahead."

The work on the pitch is just one part of a broader upgrade at Anfield over the summer. Work has also started on: increasing the number of wheelchair bays from 195 to more than 250 positions; adding more than 150 extra amenity and easy-access seats around the stadium; improving viewing positions for visiting disabled supporters; and creating new raised disabled bays in the Centenary Stand for disabled supporters.

External improvements to the stadium are also being made, with a new lift to give inclusive access to the Centenary Stand and expansion of the Kop to increase the general admission seating by around 470. The new lift tower will be the full height of the Centenary Stand and will take disabled supporters to the upper levels of the stand where they will access new wheelchair platforms at the rear of the lower tier.



The new retail store takes shape (right)

Meanwhile work is continuing on Anfield's flagship retail store, with fans soon able to enjoy a brand new LFC shopping experience, and the 'Anfield Forever' project along 96 Avenue continues apace: the area will be a celebration of the club and its players, managers and global supporters, formed of specially-engraved granite stones.

Nearby, the Anfield Road fanzone is being relocated, providing a much larger space for food and retail concessions and also activities for young fans on matchdays, while the club is enhancing the existing food and beverage areas on the corner of Walton Breck Road and Skerries Road and the corner of Walton Breck Road and Venmore Street.

Andrew Parkinson adds: "Building on the success of the Main Stand, we are committed to providing the ultimate fan experience and ensuring a memorable visit for all to Anfield."



THE LFC FOUNDATION IS THE OFFICIAL CHARITY OF LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB. WE CREATE LIFE CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MERSEYSIDE AND BEYOND. FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @LFCFOUNDATION

Kirkby: where the cup competitions took place

CUP KIDS DO LFC PROUD

Academy hosts two awesome cup competitions while girls team triumphs down at Chelsea

Two prestigious cup competitions were hosted by the Liverpool FC Academy recently.

In June it was Northwood Community Primary School which reigned supreme at this year's Ian Frodsham Memorial Cup at the LFC Academy. Ten local primary-school teams took part in the tournament, organised by the Liverpool FC Foundation and held annually in memory of Ian Frodsham, an extremely promising young footballer who joined the Reds as an Under-11 from Brookfield School in Kirkby. Ian tragically died in 1995 at the age of 19 from a spinal tumour.

The Memorial Cup was played in a two-league format with five teams in each, with the league winners meeting each other in the final. Northwood Community beat St Francis de Sales on penalties after it was goalless at full-time. Ian's mother Lyn presented the trophy to the winning team.

Earlier in the month the club celebrated the 39th anniversary of the Liverpool Cup with the Academy playing host. The competition, which involves thousands of young local footballers, was created in 1978 for schoolchildren across Merseyside. This year over 2,500 boys and 1,000 girls participated, with the semi-finals and finals being held at the Academy.

The boys' final was played between Birkenhead School and St Paul's Junior School, with the former running out 3-1







winners. In the girls' competition, Malvern Junior School defeated Barlow's Primary School 6-1 in the final.

Ronnie Moran's son Paul was guest of honour to make the presentations to the winning teams, and also to the night's best players: Zara Shaw from Malvern Junior School and Jacob Fowler from Birkenhead School.

Liverpool Cup secretary Steve Sass said: "To be able to give local youngsters the opportunity to play at the Academy is fantastic, so we are extremely grateful for the support of Liverpool FC once again. The tournament goes from strength to strength and we are already looking forward to planning for next season."

Elsewhere a Merseyside school team representing the LFC Foundation won the 2017 Premier League Schools Tournament. Chesterfield High School U13 girls team, from Crosby, travelled to Stamford Bridge for the national finals to face representatives from the nineteen other Premier League clubs.

The girls were given an authentic matchday experience, walking out to the Premier League anthem wearing official LFC kit, before battling it out to claim the trophy. The annual tournament, one of the elements of the Premier League Primary Stars programme, is now in its 12th year and sees representatives of all 20 PL clubs take part in the six-a-side competitions across two categories.

The LFC Foundation ran a number of heats and qualifiers over a seven-month period, beginning last September, with 170 local schools taking part in total. The regional finals were held at the LFC Academy in March, with Chesterfield High winning the U13 girls' tournament and Bidston Avenue Primary School triumphant in the U11 mixed category.

US Embassy visit



The US Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires paid a special visit to Anfield to meet a group of military veterans from the LFC Foundation.

Lewis Lukens, along with a group of United States Embassy officials, met with LFC Foundation staff and members of the Military Veterans programme to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of US-UK military cooperation.

The visitors learned about the Foundation's work with the veterans before heading out to play a friendly game of football at Admiral Park in Toxteth.

Mr Lukens said: "It was wonderful to visit the historic Liverpool Football Club and learn about the work the LFC Foundation is doing with UK veterans. It is important to honour the sacrifices our armed forces make on behalf of both of our nations."

The Military Veterans programme helps veterans in the greater Liverpool area re-integrate into civilian life by offering football coaching sessions and local tournaments.

The programme promotes physical activity, team work, self confidence and general good health and wellbeing, as well as training and education opportunities for ex-military personnel.

Anfield's winning matchday welcome



Liverpool FC was a winner at the prestigious Stadium Business Awards in Dublin, with recognition for its Red Thread Team's customer-experience training at Anfield.

The Red Thread Team is central to creating, implementing and delivering an inspiring matchday experience. It has shaped a programme for all line-managers that are responsible for LFC's matchday operation with over 2,800 staff.

Andrew Parkinson, LFC operations director, said: "We pride ourselves in delivering a first-class fan experience for all our fans. We take on board fans' feedback and are continually striving to ensure our fans enjoy a memorable experience at Anfield. The Red Thread Team deserves recognition for their hard work, commitment, innovation and creativity and most of all for the fan-experience constantly delivered at Anfield."

WHAT'S IN



LFC Kids unisex wellies
(A3243) **£15** reduced from £20!



LFC Skills goal set
(A7872) **£25**

LFC Girls red padded jacket
(A7089) **£40**



LFC Junior black training motion rain jacket 17/18
(JJ203B) **£55**

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LFC Jumbo stationery set (A8753) **£10**



LFC Red headphones (A8887) **£20**



LFC Backpack (A8776) **£15**



LFC Captain armband (A10060) **£5**



QUIZ ANSWERS: LIVERPOOL p9: The three anagrams are: a) Spion Kop, b) Anfield Road and c) Shankly Gates;
FOOTBALL p21: b) 81. Joel Matip made 81 headed clearances for Liverpool FC in Premier League action last season. Dejan Lovren made 112 and James Milner produced 50;
CLUB p89: Roger Hunt scored twice against France in England's 2-0 victory in their final group game of the 1966 World Cup finals on 20 July 1966.


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